amar chitra katha

No. 121 Rs. 3.00

Veer Dhaval

AN ADAPTATION OF NATH MADHAV'S FAMOUS MARATHI CLASSIC

"Veer Dhaval" is one of Nath Madhav's better known Marathi novels and this Amar Chitra Katha is based on it. The novel as a literary form was unknown to our country till the advent of the British. The early novels in Indian languages were either translations of the European originals or were based on them. Veer Dhaval is a novel with a historical background. Being a story of court intrigue, it involves a number of characters. To enable our readers to keep track of them we have prepared a list of the major characters.

KEERTI VARMA - the murdered master of Fort Ajinkya.

CHANDA VARMA – Keerti Varma's brother. The present master of Fort Ajinkya and a henchman of the king of Kalyan.

RANARAG – a servant in Chanda Varma's pay.

VANITA – the maid who saves Veer Dhaval and who appears later as Vanachari.

VEER DHAVAL – Keerti Varma's son; brought up by Satyashreya.

SATYASHREYA – master of Fort Lalit and a loyal chieftain.

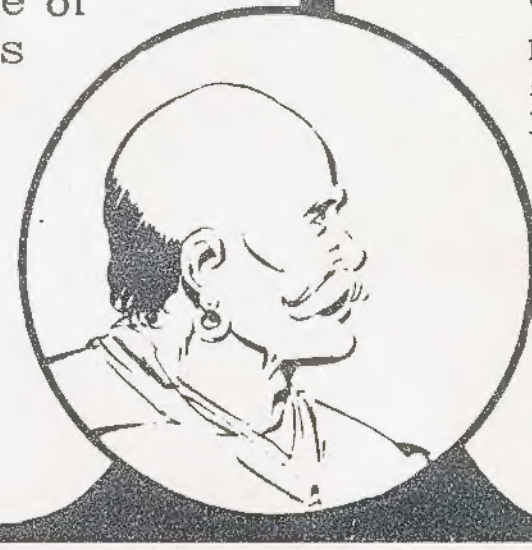
CHANDRASENA AND LALITA –

son and daughter of Satyashreya.

VIJJAL – one of Satyashreya's attendants.

CHANDRACHUD – master of Fort Prasad, in league with Chanda Varma.

DURJAT AND UNMATT – dacoit brothers, operating from their hideout, Lion's Den, near Fort Ajinkya.



SALHAN – an armsmith residing at Rajmahendri, the Chalukya capital.

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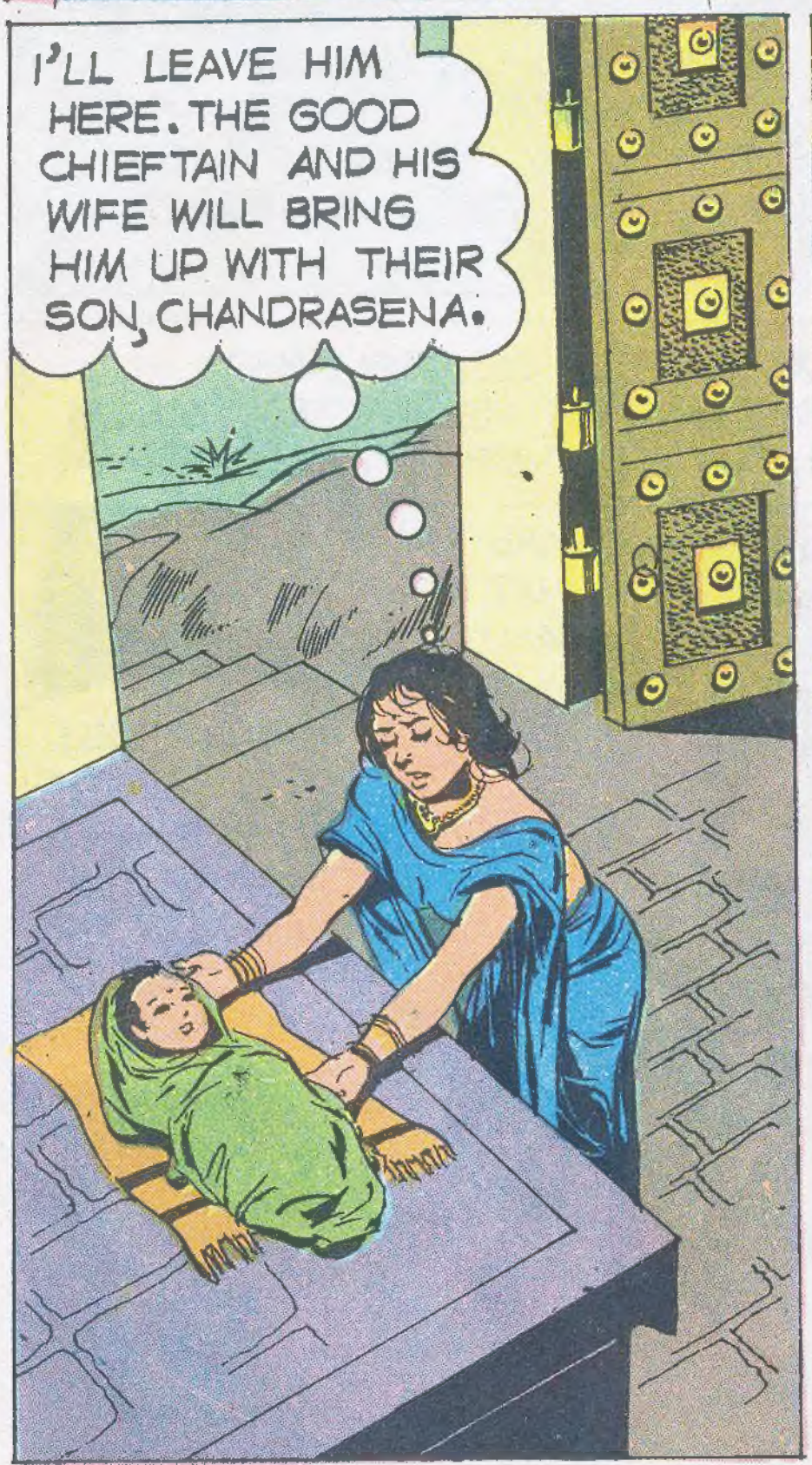
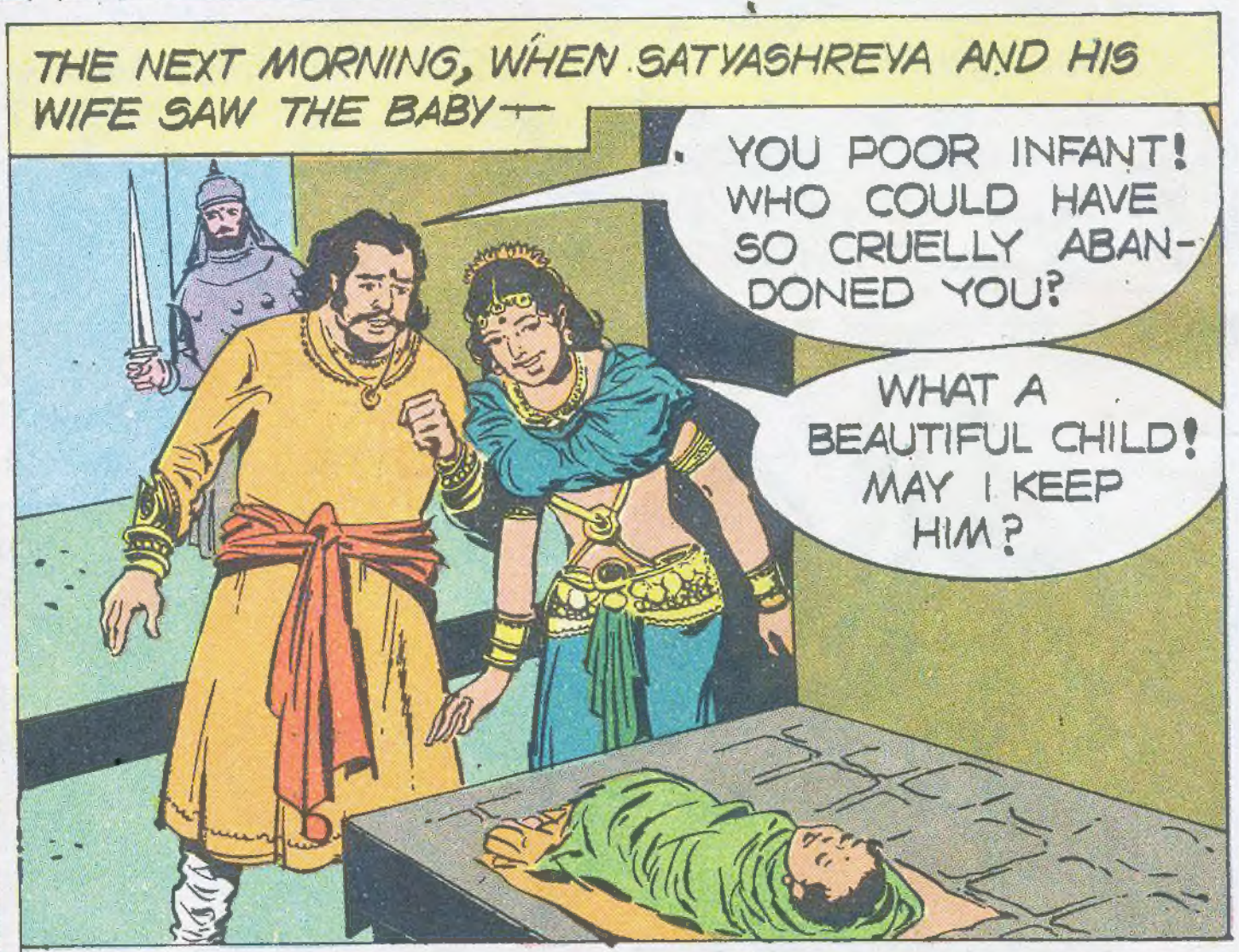
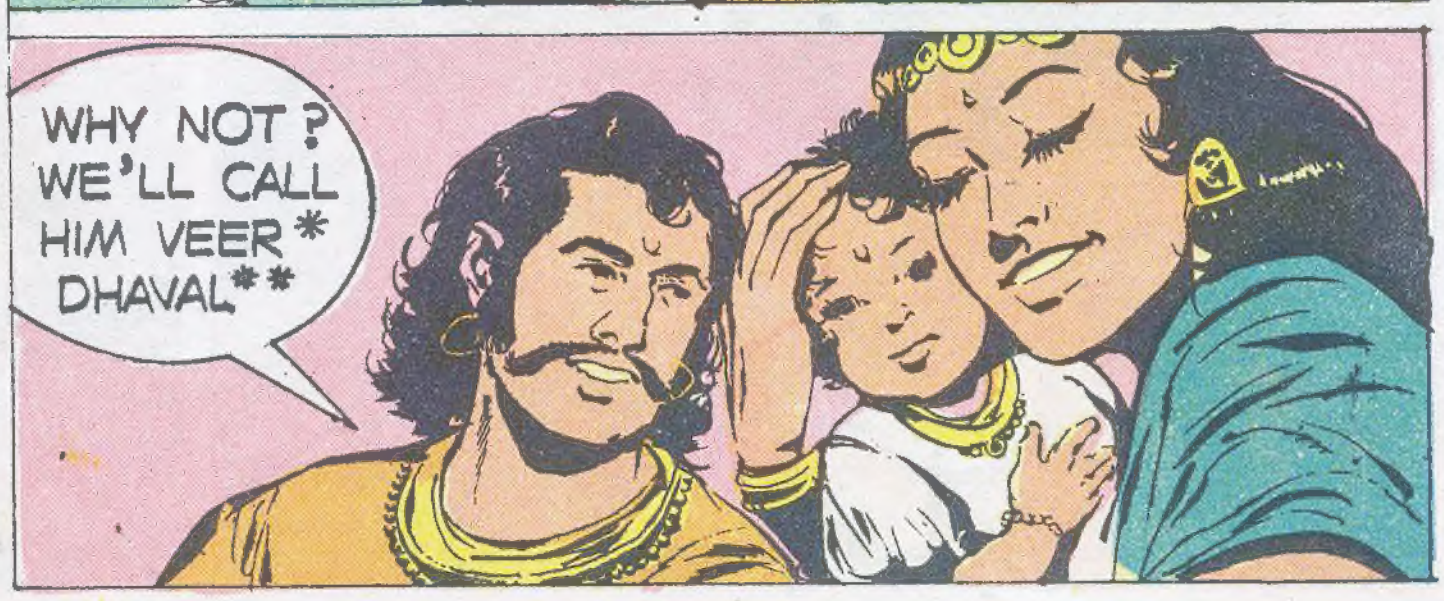
VEER DHAVAL

CENTURIES AGO, CHANDRAKETU, THE CHALUKYA KING, RULED FROM RAJMAHENDRI, HIS CAPITAL. HIS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS INCLUDED SEVERAL VASSAL CHIEFTAINS. AMONG THEM WERE KEERTI VARMA, MASTER OF FORT AJINKYA; CHANDRACHUD, MASTER OF FORT PRASAD; AND SATYASHREYA, OF FORT LALIT. ONE NEW YEAR'S DAY, TWO HOODED FIGURES MURDERED KEERTI VARMA AND HIS WIFE. THEIR SON, HOWEVER, WAS SAVED BY HIS MAID. ONE OF THE TWO MONKS WHO WITNESSED THE ASSASSINATION WAS ALSO MURDERED. THE OTHER GOT AWAY.

THE CRUEL DEED ACCOMPLISHED, RANARAG RAN TO HIS MASTER, CHANDA VARMA, THE BROTHER OF KEERTI VARMA.







 *BRAVE **THE FAIR ONE.

TWENTY-FOUR YEARS LATER, THE CHALUKYA KING DIED. A SPY BROUGHT THE NEWS TO THE KING OF KALYAN.

SIR, CHANDRAKETU IS DEAD. HE HAS LEFT BEHIND A PREGNANT QUEEN BUT NO HEIR.

THIS IS GOOD NEWS INDEED!

I MUST CONTACT MY HENCHMEN, CHANDRACHUD OF FORT PRASAD AND CHANDA VARMA OF FORT AJINKYA. FORTUNATELY FOR ME, THEY VIRTUALLY CONTROL THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AT RAJMAHENDRI.

A FEW DAYS LATER, AT RAJMAHENDRI, CHANDRACHUD AND CHANDA VARMA RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM THE KING OF KALYAN.

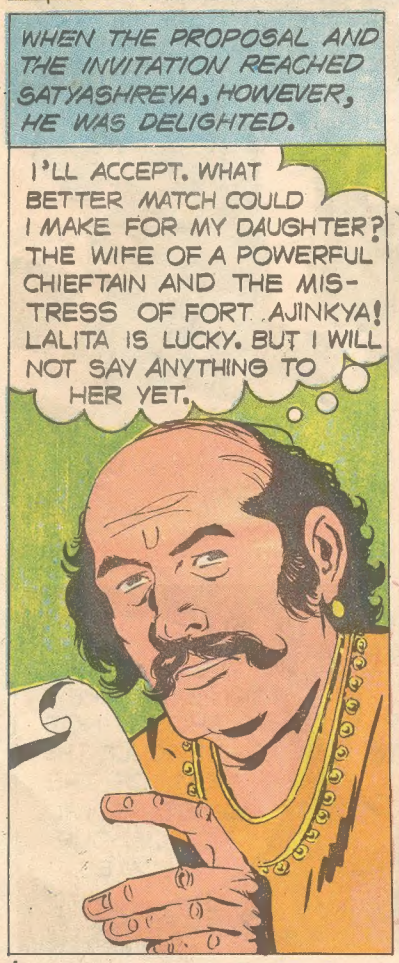
WHAT DOES IT SAY?

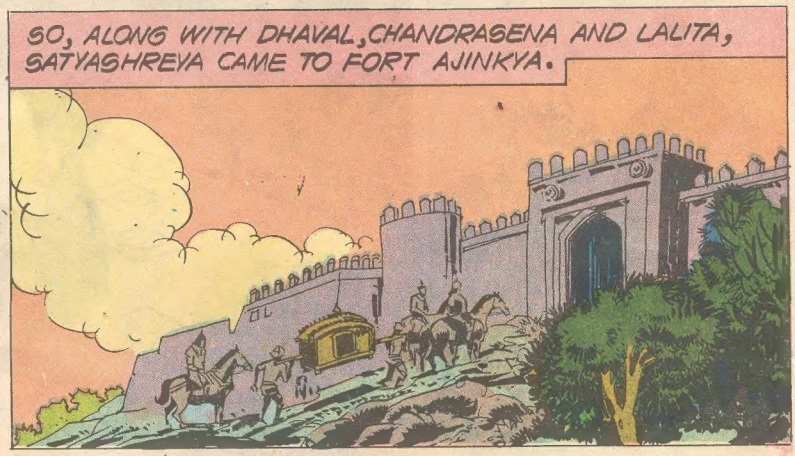
HE WANTS US TO ABDUCT THE ROYAL CHILD AS SOON AS THE QUEEN DELIVERS IT, AND TAKE IT IN SECRECY TO KALYAN.

BUT FOR THE LOYAL CHIEF-TAIN SATYASHREYA, IT SHOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT. THE REST OF THE MINISTERS WILL FOLLOW OUR DICTATES.

WHY DON'T YOU INVITE SATYASHREYA AND HIS CHILDREN TO STAY FOR A WHILE AT FORT AJINKYA?
A GOOD IDEA, CHANDRACHUD! THAT SHOULD KEEP HIM OUT OF RAJMAHENDRI AND OUR WAY.

WITH THE INVITATION, WHY DON'T YOU SEND A PROPOSAL FOR HIS DAUGHTER'S HAND? THE ALLIANCE WILL GIVE YOU A HOLD OVER HIM.
HE MAY NOT AGREE. I AM FIFTY AND HIS DAUGHTER HAS JUST TURNED SIXTEEN! LET'S SEE.

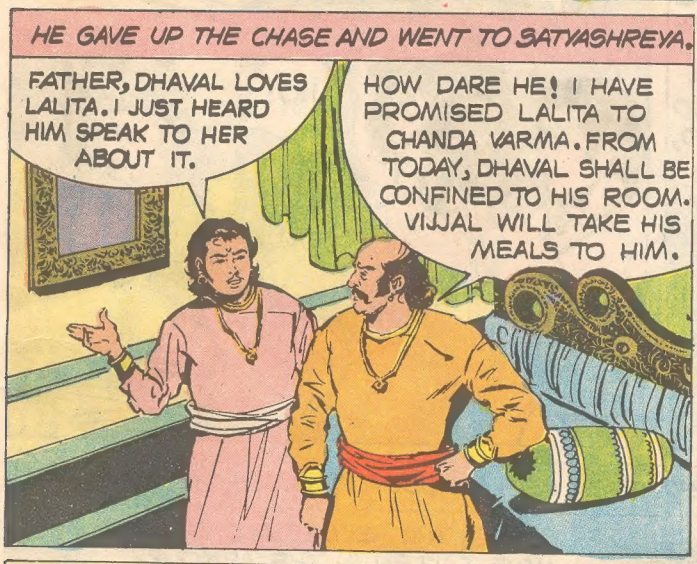

WHEN THE PROPOSAL AND THE INVITATION REACHED SATYASHREYA, HOWEVER, HE WAS DELIGHTED.
I'LL ACCEPT. WHAT BETTER MATCH COULD I MAKE FOR MY DAUGHTER? THE WIFE OF A POWERFUL CHIEFTAIN AND THE MISTRESS OF FORT AJINKYA! LALITA IS LUCKY. BUT I WILL NOT SAY ANYTHING TO HER YET.

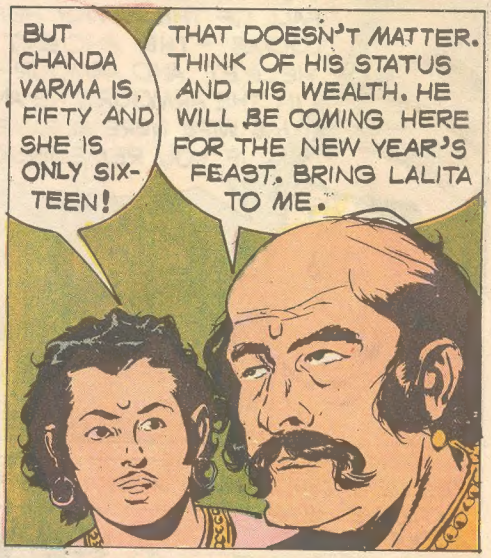

SO, ALONG WITH DHAVAL, CHANDRASENA AND LALITA, SATYASHREYA CAME TO FORT AJINKYA.

ONE EVENING, AS THE THREE YOUNGSTERS WERE OUT FOR A WALK, DHAVAL, NOW A STRAPPING YOUTH OF TWENTY-FOUR, TURNED TO LALITA.
LALITA, I WANT TO MARRY YOU. DO YOU CARE FOR ME?
DO YOU DOUBT THAT?

SUDDENLY, A HAGGARD OLD WOMAN JUMPED OUT FROM BEHIND A BUSH.
YOU MAKE A PERFECT PAIR! GOD BLESS YOU.
WHO COULD SHE BE?

CHANDRASENA RAN AFTER THE OLD WOMAN BUT SHE ESCAPED INTO THE WOODS


HE GAVE UP THE CHASE AND WENT TO SATYASHREYA.
FATHER, DHAVAL LOVES LALITA. I JUST HEARD HIM SPEAK TO HER ABOUT IT.
HOW DARE HE! I HAVE PROMISED LALITA TO CHANDA VARMA. FROM TODAY, DHAVAL SHALL BE CONFINED TO HIS ROOM. VIJJAL WILL TAKE HIS MEALS TO HIM.


BUT CHANDA VARMA IS, FIFTY AND SHE IS ONLY SIX-TEEN!
THAT DOESN'T MATTER. THINK OF HIS STATUS AND HIS WEALTH. HE WILL BE COMING HERE FOR THE NEW YEAR'S FEAST. BRING LALITA TO ME.

WHEN LALITA HEARD OF SATYABHREYA'S DECISION, SHE FAINTED.
ATTEND TO HER. SHE WILL COME ROUND SOON. THIS IS ONLY THE INI-TIAL SHOCK.

AS SATYASHREYA AND CHANDRASENA CAME OUT OF THE ROOM, THEY MET RANARAG, CHANDA VARMA'S SERVANT.

OH! I'VE BEEN WANTING TO ASK YOU SOMETHING. IS IT TRUE THAT THE OLD MASTER OF THE CASTLE PRESENTS HIMSELF AT THE NEW YEAR'S FEAST?

RANARAG WAS QUIET FOR A MINUTE. THEN—

YES, HE DOES! IN FACT, HIS GHOST OFTEN COMES ON OTHER DAYS TOO. HIS VISIT IS HERALDED BY THE FALL OF THE FAMILY HEIRLOOMS — THE ANCIENT HELMET AND ARMOUR — IN THE ARMOURY. HE AND HIS WIFE WERE MURDERED, IF YOU REMEMBER.

HAVEN'T THEY CAUGHT THE MURDERERS YET?

NO!

THE NEXT DAY, CHANDA VARMA ARRIVED. WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO CROSS THE MAIN GATE, HE HEARD A LOUD CLANG.

OH NO! THE HELMET AND ARMOUR HAVE FALLEN IN THE ARMOURY. SOME EVIL IS SURE TO BEFALL ME.

CLANG! CLANG!

LOOK! HE SHIVERS WITH FRIGHT!

WHEN CHANDA VARMA ENTERED THE CASTLE AND SAW LALITA, HOWEVER, HE SOON RECOVERED FROM HIS FRIGHT.

HOW BEAUTIFUL SHE IS!

HOW I HATE THE SIGHT OF HIM.

THAT NIGHT, WHEN VIJJAL WENT TO DHAVAL WITH HIS DINNER —

ALAS! THE LIGHT HAS GONE OUT OF LALITA'S EYES. SHE IS MISERABLE.

VIJJAL, I MUST MEET HER. PLEASE ARRANGE A SECRET MEETING FOR US IN THE WOODS TOMORROW.

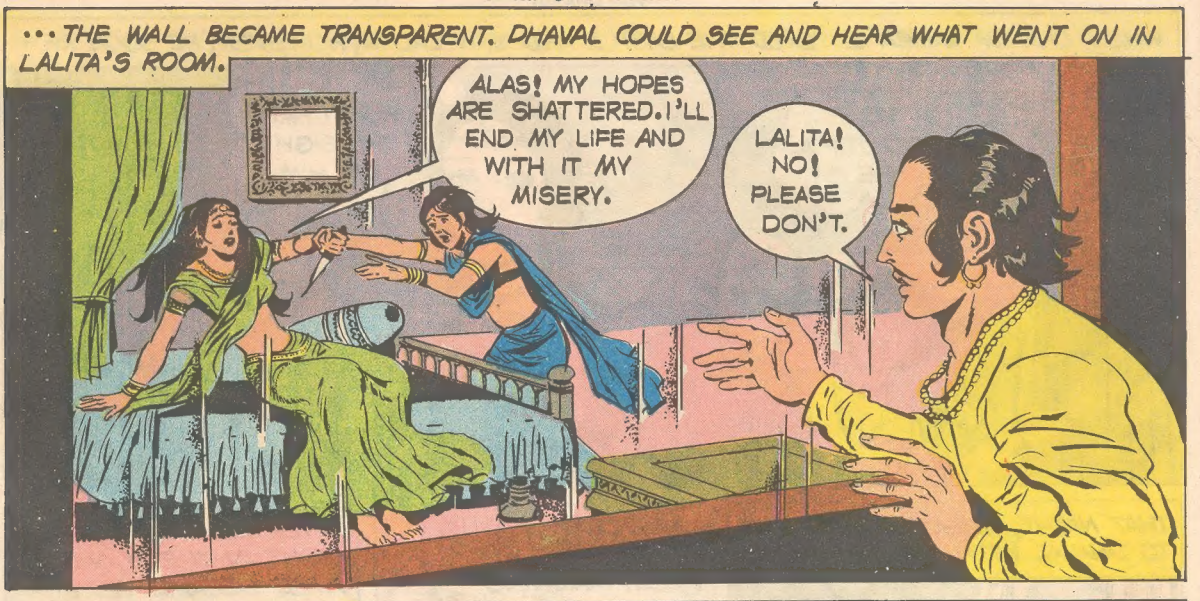
I WILL DO ANYTHING TO PREVENT HER FROM MARRYING THAT OLD CHIEFTAIN.

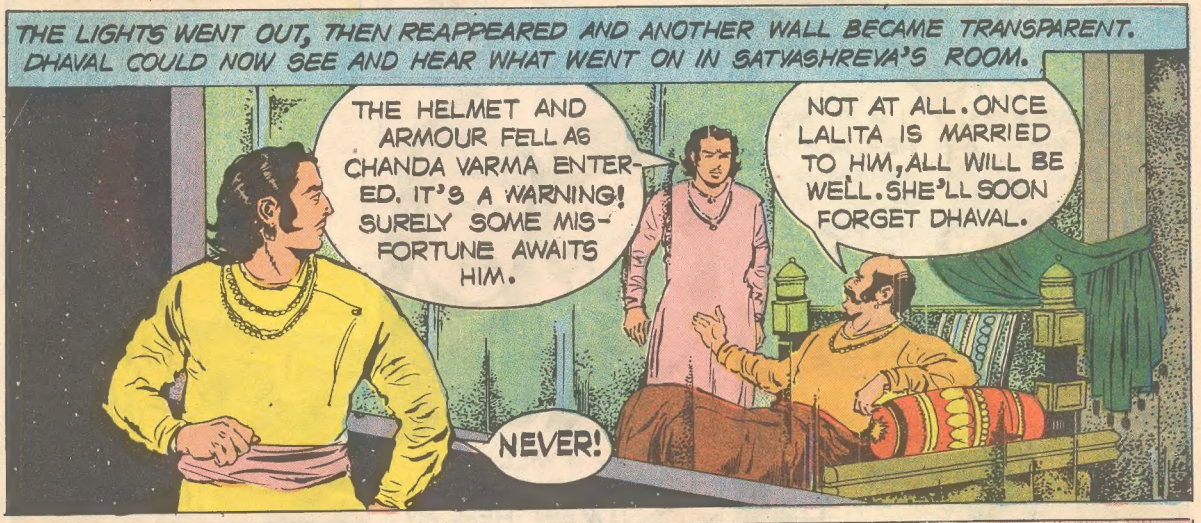
I WILL HAVE NO PEACE TILL I MEET HER. MY HEART IS FULL OF MISGIVINGS.

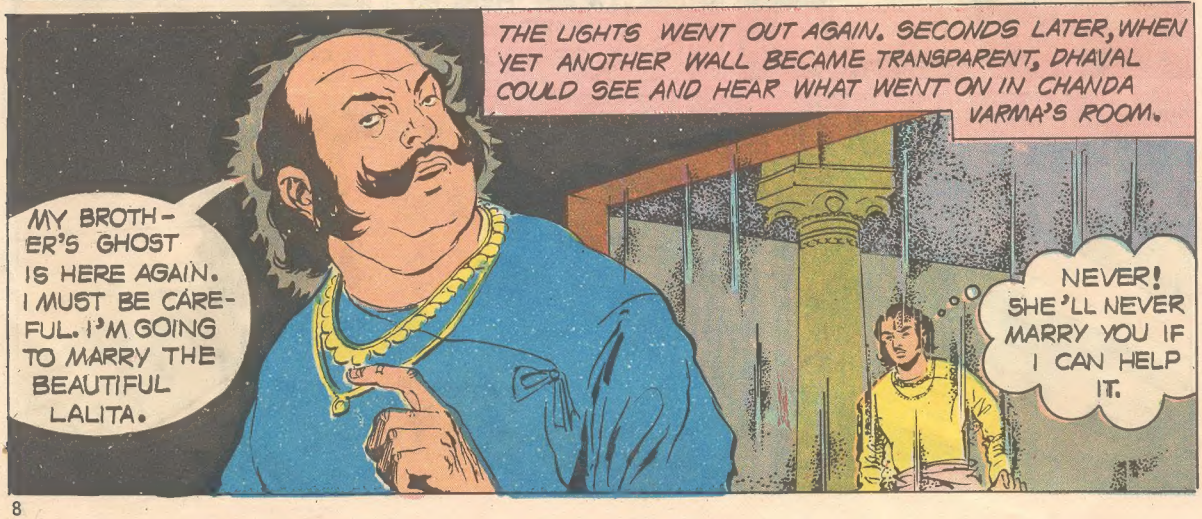
AFTER VIJJAL LEFT, THE LIGHT IN THE ROOM FIRST BECAME VERY BRIGHT...

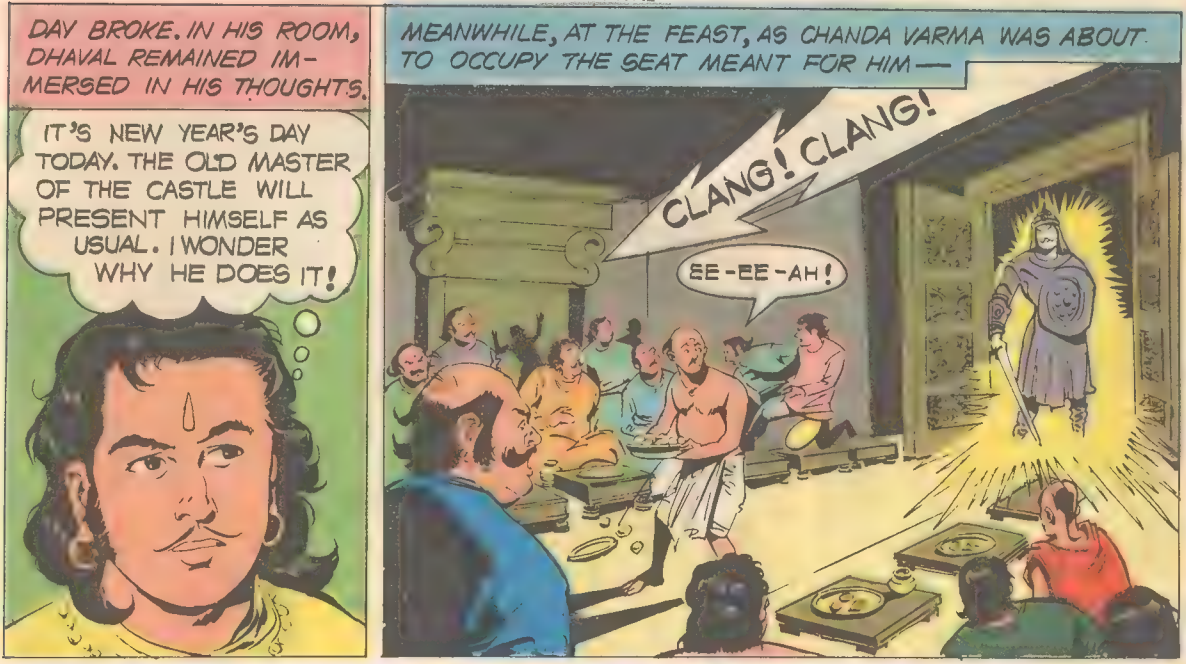
...THEN FADED AND FINALLY WENT OUT.

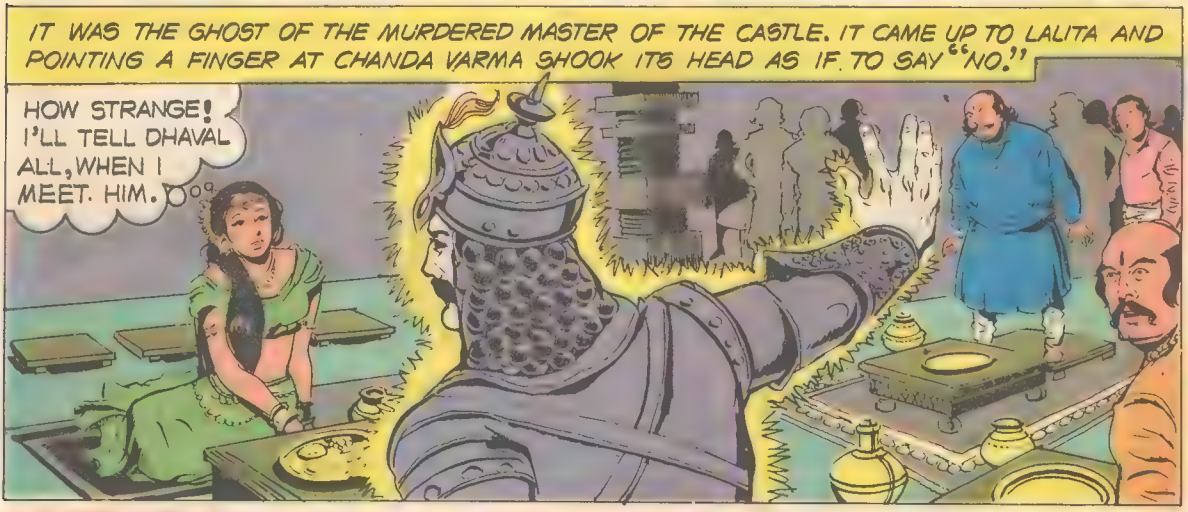
A FLASH OF RAINBOW COLOURS APPEARED ON THE WALL AND...

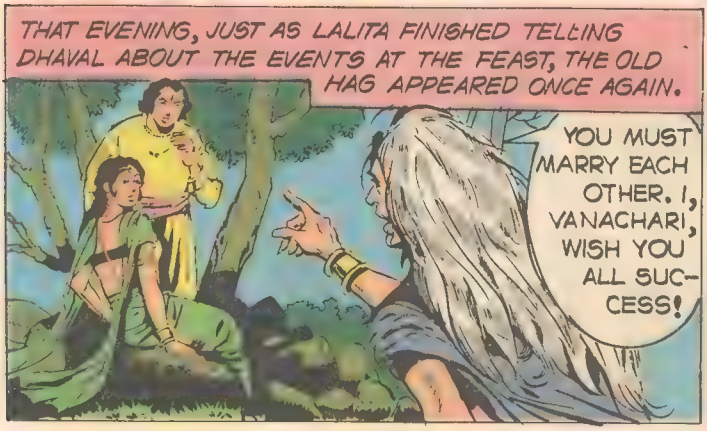

...THE WALL BECAME TRANSPARENT. DHAVAL COULD SEE AND HEAR WHAT WENT ON IN LALITA'S ROOM.
ALAS! MY HOPES ARE SHATTERED. I'LL END MY LIFE AND WITH IT MY MISERY.
LALITA! NO! PLEASE DON'T.

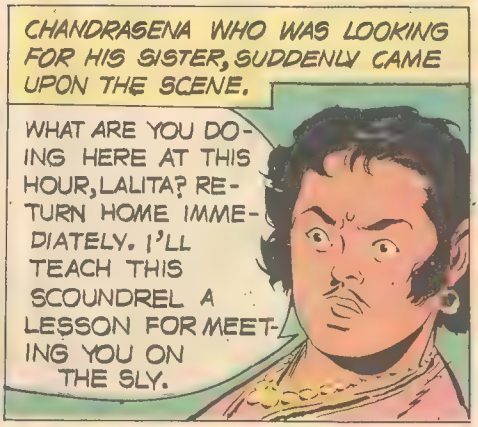

THE LIGHTS WENT OUT, THEN REAPPEARED AND ANOTHER WALL BECAME TRANSPARENT. DHAVAL COULD NOW SEE AND HEAR WHAT WENT ON IN SATYASHREVA'S ROOM.
THE HELMET AND ARMOUR FELL AS CHANDA VARMA ENTERED. IT'S A WARNING! SURELY SOME MISFORTUNE AWAITS HIM.
NOT AT ALL. ONCE LALITA IS MARRIED TO HIM, ALL WILL BE WELL. SHE'LL SOON FORGET DHAVAL.
NEVER!


THE LIGHTS WENT OUT AGAIN. SECONDS LATER, WHEN YET ANOTHER WALL BECAME TRANSPARENT, DHAVAL COULD SEE AND HEAR WHAT WENT ON IN CHANDA VARMA'S ROOM.
MY BROTHER'S GHOST IS HERE AGAIN. I MUST BE CAREFUL. I'M GOING TO MARRY THE BEAUTIFUL LALITA.
NEVER! SHE'LL NEVER MARRY YOU IF I CAN HELP IT.

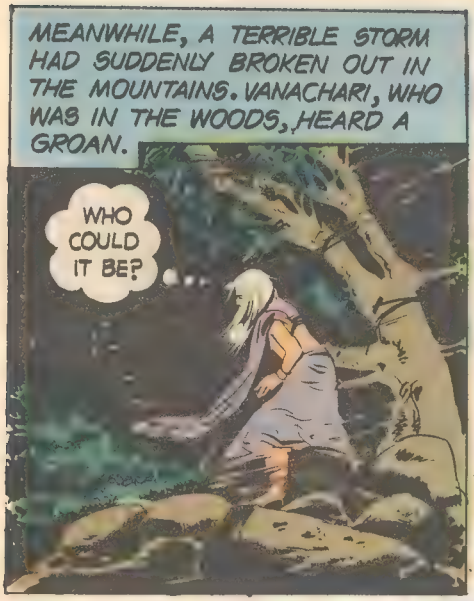

DAY BROKE. IN HIS ROOM, DHAVAL REMAINED IMMERSED IN HIS THOUGHTS.
IT'S NEW YEAR'S DAY TODAY. THE OLD MASTER OF THE CASTLE WILL PRESENT HIMSELF AS USUAL. I WONDER WHY HE DOES IT!
MEANWHILE, AT THE FEAST, AS CHANDA VARMA WAS ABOUT TO OCCUPY THE SEAT MEANT FOR HIM—
CLANG! CLANG!
EE-EE-AH!

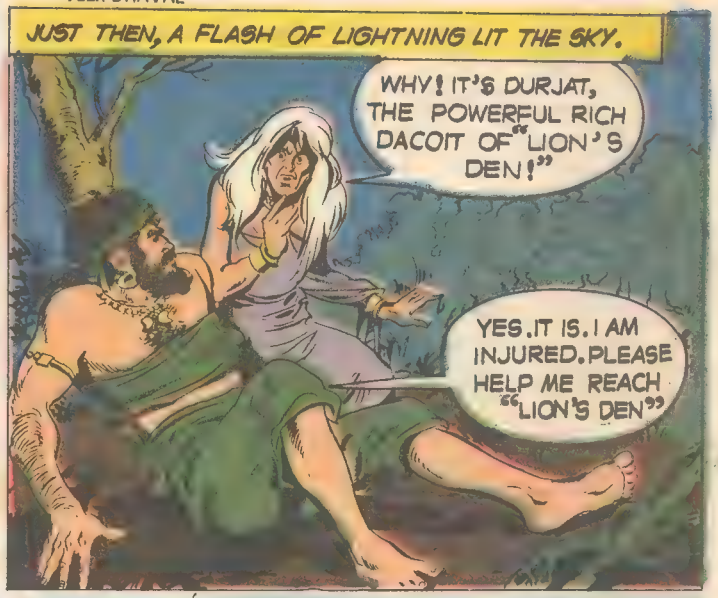

IT WAS THE GHOST OF THE MURDERED MASTER OF THE CASTLE. IT CAME UP TO LALITA AND POINTING A FINGER AT CHANDA VARMA SHOOK ITS HEAD AS IF TO SAY "NO."
HOW STRANGE! I'LL TELL DHAVAL ALL, WHEN I MEET HIM.

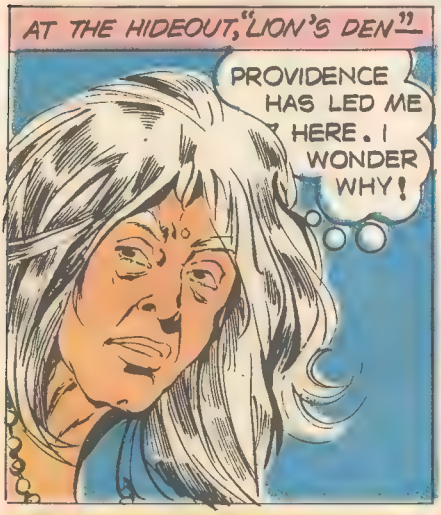

THAT EVENING, JUST AS LALITA FINISHED TELLING DHAVAL ABOUT THE EVENTS AT THE FEAST, THE OLD HAG APPEARED ONCE AGAIN.
YOU MUST MARRY EACH OTHER. I, VANACHARI, WISH YOU ALL SUCCESS!

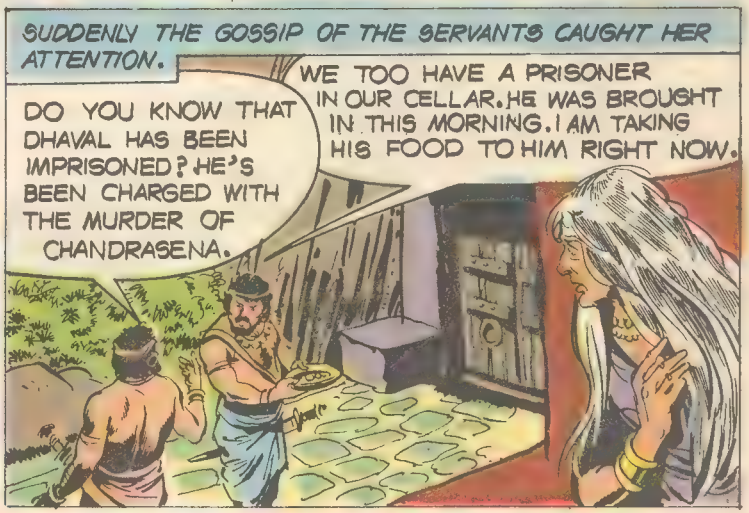

CHANDRASENA WHO WAS LOOKING FOR HIS SISTER, SUDDENLY CAME UPON THE SCENE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE AT THIS HOUR, LALITA? RETURN HOME IMMEDIATELY. I'LL TEACH THIS SCOUNDREL A LESSON FOR MEETING YOU ON THE SLY.

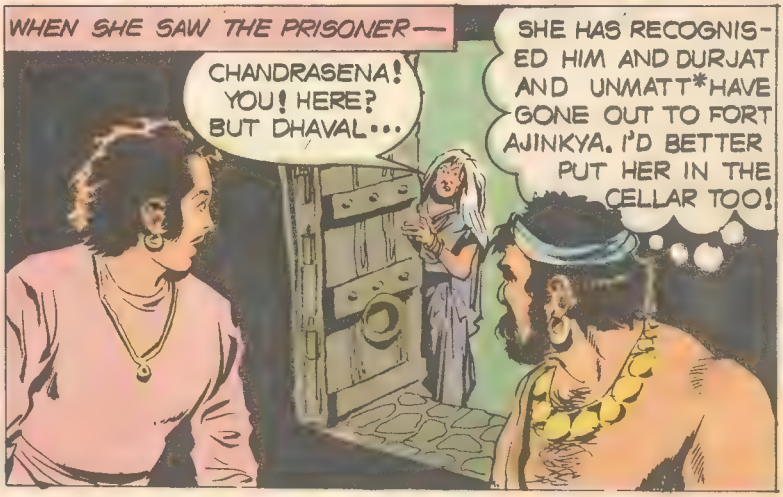
TOWARDS NIGHTFALL, A WORRIED SATYASHREYA PACED UP AND DOWN HIS ROOM.
IT'S HOURS SINCE I SENT CHANDRASENA OUT TO FETCH LALITA. SHE HAS RETURNED. WHERE COULD HE HAVE GONE?
JUST THEN, CHANDA VARMA AND TWO FOREST GUARDS CHARGED INTO THE ROOM.
SIR, SEE WHAT WE'VE FOUND BY THE STREAM. WE FEAR YOUR SON HAS BEEN MURDERED.
CHANDRASENA'S SHIRT AND HEAD-DRESS! THE HILT OF DHAVAL'S SWORD!
WHAT!
DHAVAL SHALL BE IM-PRISONED IN THE CELLAR WITH HIS FEET CHAINED!
WHEN THE OTHERS LEFT, LALITA WEPT BITTERLY.
I AM THE CAUSE OF ALL THIS. BUT MY HEART TELLS ME THAT DHAVAL CANNOT BE GUILTY OF A FOUL MURDER.
A LITTLE LATER, CHANDA VARMA CAME TO HER.
IF YOU PROMISE TO BE MINE, DHAVAL CAN ESCAPE WITH HIS LIFE. OR ELSE... HE SHALL DIE.
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO END ALL HIS TROUBLES.
I PROMISE. PLEASE SPARE HIS LIFE.











* DURJAT'S BROTHER.

MEANWHILE, AT FORT AJINKYA, CHANDA VARMA WENT TO SEE DHAVAL.
LALITA WANTS ME TO FREE YOU. YOU MAY GO. TWO OF MY GUARDS WILL ESCORT YOU.

WHEN DHAVAL AND THE TWO GUARDS WERE ABOUT TO LEAVE, CHANDA VARMA DREW ONE OF THEM ASIDE.
FINISH HIM OFF WHEN YOU REACH THE WOODS!

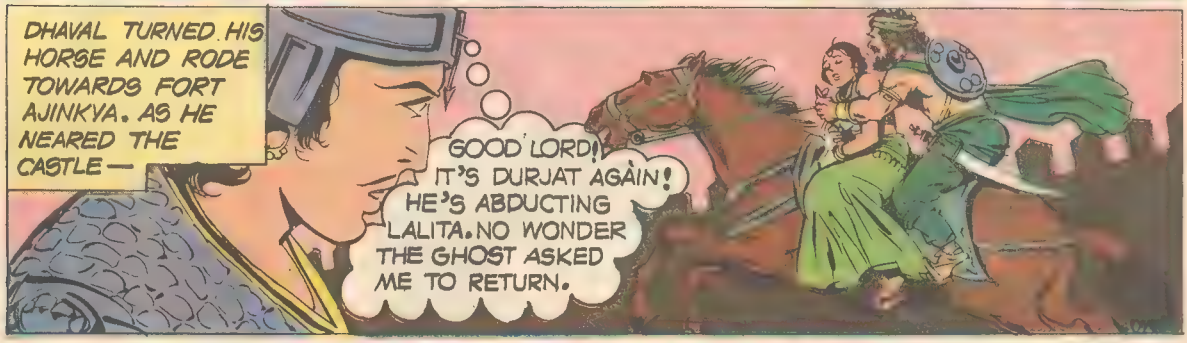
AS THEY RODE OUT OF FORT AJINKYA, THEY ENCOUNTERED DURJAT, UNMATT AND A FEW MEN, RIDING TOWARDS THE CASTLE.
DURJAT AND UNMATT! I MUST NOT LET THEM ESCAPE.

DHAVAL TOOK ON DURJAT AND SOON HAD HIM ON THE GROUND.
OUR LEADER HAS FALLEN. CHARGE!

THEY RUSHED AT DHAVAL AND THE GUARDS. IN THE SCUFFLE THAT ENSUED, BOTH THE GUARDS WERE KILLED.

I'LL RIDE ON TO FORT AJINKYA AND DO WHAT I'D SET OUT TO DO — MAKE THE BEAUTY. LALITA MINE.
HE IS INJURED LET HIM GO. I'LL RIDE ON.

AFTER DHAVAL RODE SOME DISTANCE, HE CAME UPON A CRYSTAL PILLAR. NEAR IT STOOD THE GHOST.
GO BACK TO FORT AJINKYA.
I RESPECT YOUR COMMAND, SIR. I WILL!


DHAVAL TURNED HIS HORSE AND RODE TOWARDS FORT AJINKYA. AS HE NEARED THE CASTLE —
GOOD LORD! IT'S DURJAT AGAIN! HE'S ABDUCTING LALITA. NO WONDER THE GHOST ASKED ME TO RETURN.

HE SPRANG LIKE A LEOPARD AND TAKING DURJAT BY SURPRISE, GRABBED LALITA FROM HIM.
YOU SCOUNDREL! HOW DARE YOU TOUCH HER!

STUNNED, DURJAT RODE OFF.
I'LL GET EVEN WITH YOU SOME DAY, YOU BRAT.

HEARING THE COMMOTION, SATYASHREYA AND CHANDA VARMA CAME OUT.

POOR GIRL! SHE'S UN-CONSCIOUS.

WHAT HAPPENED? LALITA, SPEAK TO ME. I AM YOUR FATHER.

LATER, WHEN LALITA REGAINED HER CONSCIOUSNESS —

DHAVAL! FATHER! THE DACOIT TRIED TO KIDNAP ME. THANK GOD I'M SAFE.

YES. THANK GOD YOU'RE SAFE. BUT DHAVAL WILL NOW HAVE TO FACE A TRIAL. HE SHOULD NOT HAVE RE-TURNED.

I WAS GUIDED BY SUPER-NATURAL POWERS.

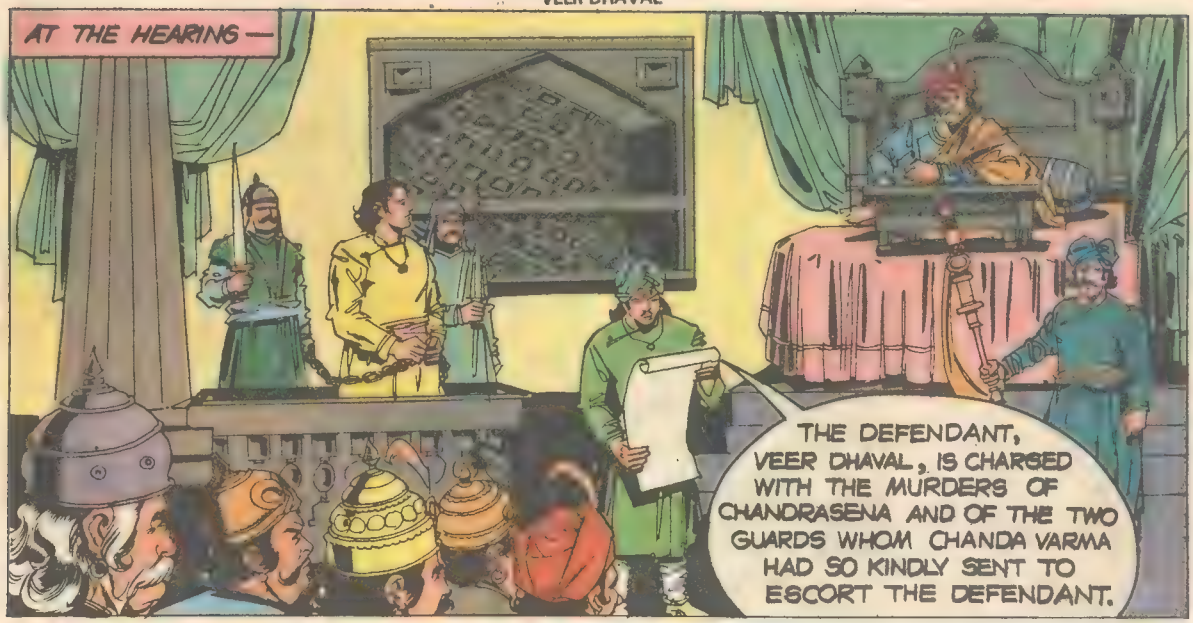
DHAVAL THEN TOLD THEM ABOUT THE GHOST AT THE CRYSTAL PILLAR. CHANDA VARMA WAS JEAL-OUS AND AFRAID.

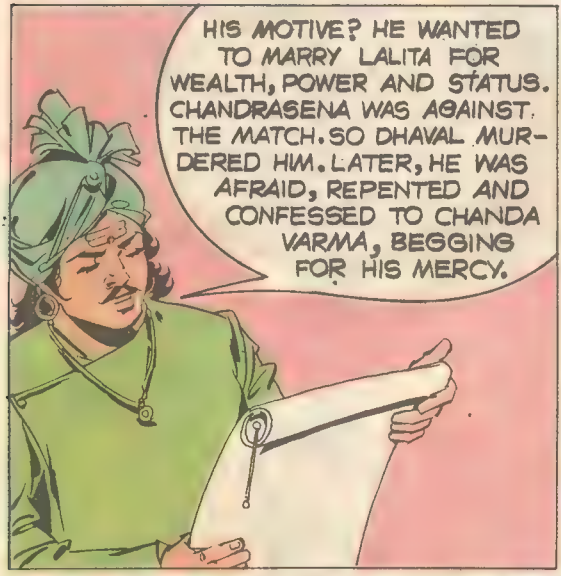
FOR SOME REASON MY BROTH-ER'S GHOST IS PARTIAL TO DHAVAL AND LALITA. I MUST PLAY MY CARDS FAST.

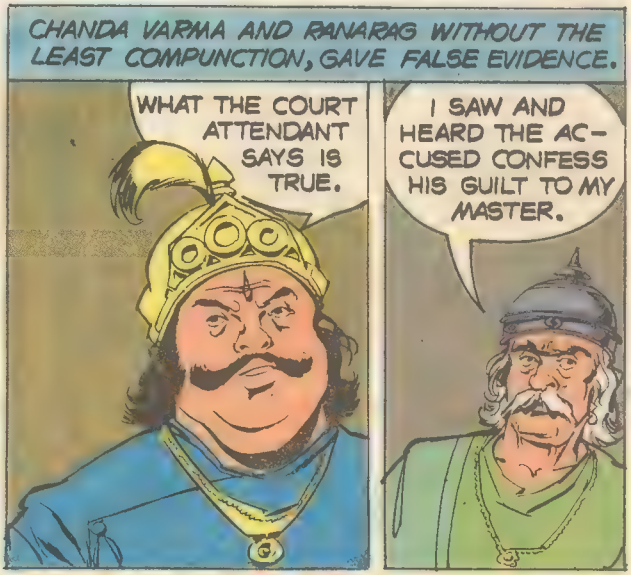
A FEW DAYS LATER —

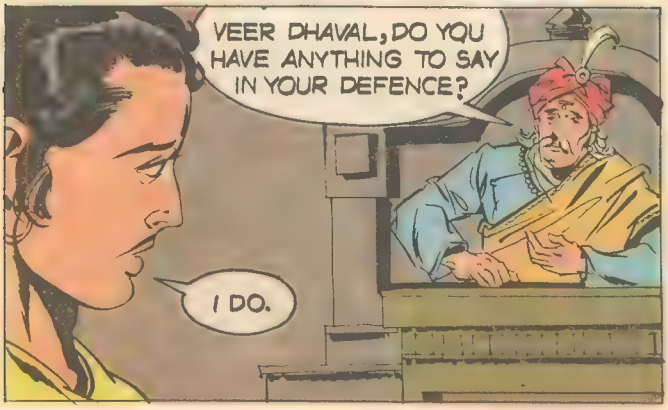
RANARAG, HAVE YOU ARRANGED FOR THE SPECIAL COURT TO TAKE UP THE CASE AGAINST DHAVAL?

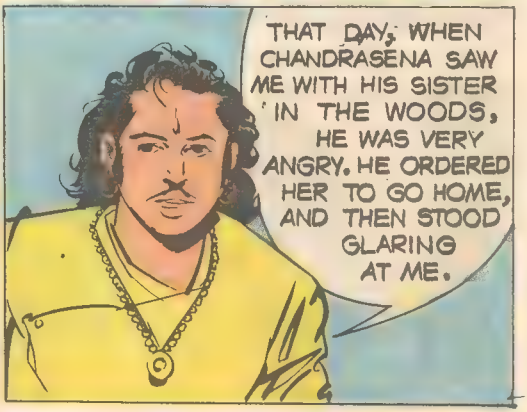
I HAVE, SIR.


AT THE HEARING —
THE DEFENDANT, VEER DHAVAL, IS CHARGED WITH THE MURDERS OF CHANDRASENA AND OF THE TWO GUARDS WHOM CHANDA VARMA HAD SO KINDLY SENT TO ESCORT THE DEFENDANT.


HIS MOTIVE? HE WANTED TO MARRY LALITA FOR WEALTH, POWER AND STATUS. CHANDRASENA WAS AGAINST THE MATCH. SO DHAVAL MURDERED HIM. LATER, HE WAS AFRAID, REPENTED AND CONFESSED TO CHANDA VARMA, BEGGING FOR HIS MERCY.


CHANDA VARMA AND RANARAG WITHOUT THE LEAST COMPUNCTION, GAVE FALSE EVIDENCE.
WHAT THE COURT ATTENDANT SAYS IS TRUE.
I SAW AND HEARD THE ACCUSED CONFESS HIS GUILT TO MY MASTER.


VEER DHAVAL, DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY IN YOUR DEFENCE?
I DO.


THAT DAY, WHEN CHANDRASENA SAW ME WITH HIS SISTER IN THE WOODS, HE WAS VERY ANGRY. HE ORDERED HER TO GO HOME, AND THEN STOOD GLARING AT ME.

"AFTER SHE HAD LEFT, A WILD BOAR SUDDENLY CAME CHARGING OUT OF THE WOODS AND WAS ABOUT TO ATTACK HIM."

CHANDRASENA!

"I THRUST MY SWORD INTO ITS NECK. THE BOAR DIED BUT MY SWORD BROKE INTO TWO. CHANDRASENA ESCAPED ALIVE."

"WHEN I RETURNED TO FORT AJINKYA, I WAS SUSPECTED OF CHANDRASENA'S MURDER AND IMPRISONED."

AS FOR THE TWO GUARDS WHO CAME TO ESCORT ME — THEY WERE KILLED BY THE DACOIT, DURJAT AND HIS HENCHMEN. I AM INNOCENT. THAT'S ALL.

BUT THE JURY WAS NOT CONVINCED. THE JUDGE GAVE THE VERDICT.

THE EVIDENCE IS AGAINST YOU. YOU WILL BE HANGED THREE DAYS HENCE.

MEANWHILE, AT "LION'S DEN" DURJAT WAS VERY HAPPY WHEN HE HEARD THE VERDICT.

MY WORST RIVAL IS OUT OF THE WAY. LALITA WILL SOON BE MINE. TONIGHT WE WILL HAVE RANARAG BROUGHT HERE. LET HIM SEE OUR PRISONERS. THEN WE WILL DICTATE TERMS.

ACCORDINGLY, THAT NIGHT THE PRISONERS WERE SHOWN TO RANARAG.

HOURS LATER, AT FORT AJINKYA, VIJJAL SAW RANARAG COMING TOWARDS CHANDA VARMA'S ROOM.

HE LOOKS DISTURBED. I WILL HIDE MYSELF AND SEE WHAT HE HAS TO SAY.

RANARAG STOOD BEFORE CHANDA VARMA.

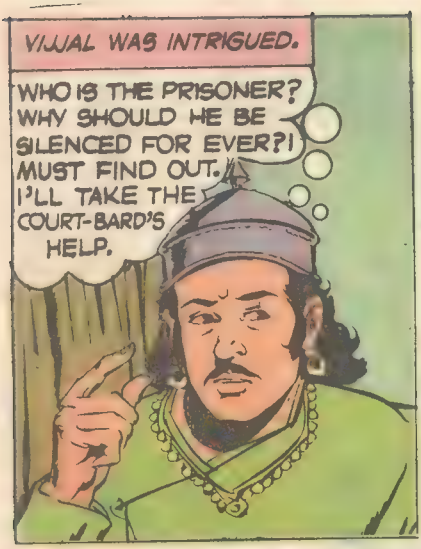
I COME FROM DURJAT. UNLESS YOU ARRANGE HIS MARRIAGE WITH LALITA, HE AND HIS TWO BROTHERS WILL PRODUCE SUCH EVIDENCE IN COURT AS WILL PROVE YOU GUILTY OF GIVING FALSE EVIDENCE.

AND IF I DO WHAT HE ASKS?

THE PRISONER IN THE "LION'S DEN" WILL BE SILENCED FOR EVER.

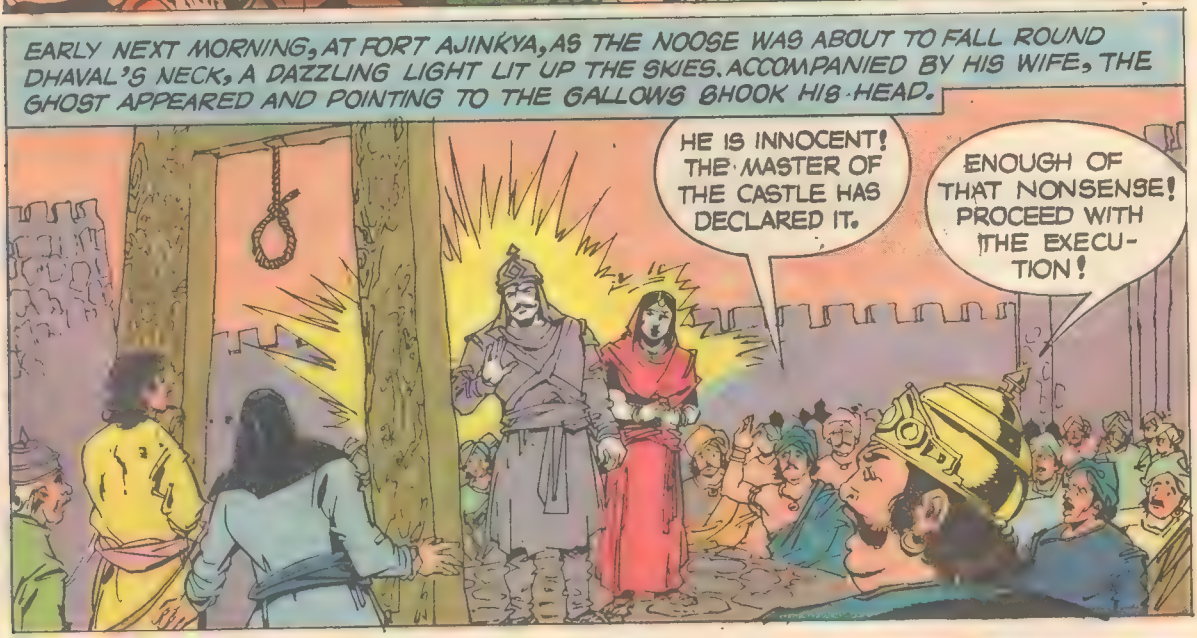
WHAT! THE SCOUNDREL IS WILLING TO SELL LALITA TO THE DACOITS!

ALL RIGHT! I AGREE. COME. I WILL GIVE MY REPLY IN WRITING.


VIJJAL WAS INTRIGUED.
WHO IS THE PRISONER? WHY SHOULD HE BE SILENCED FOR EVER?! I MUST FIND OUT. I'LL TAKE THE COURT-BARD'S HELP.

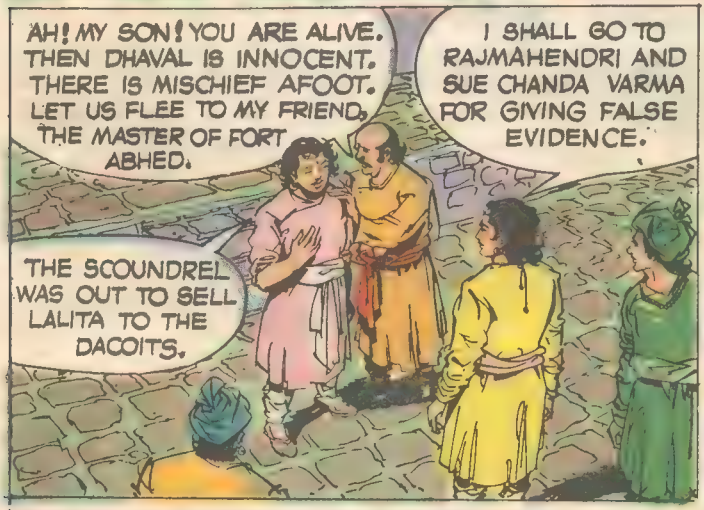
THE BARD AND VIJJAL, POSING AS SINGER AND MUSICIAN, GAINED ACCESS TO THE "LION'S DEN" WHERE THE DACOITS WERE CELEBRATING DURJAT'S VICTORY.

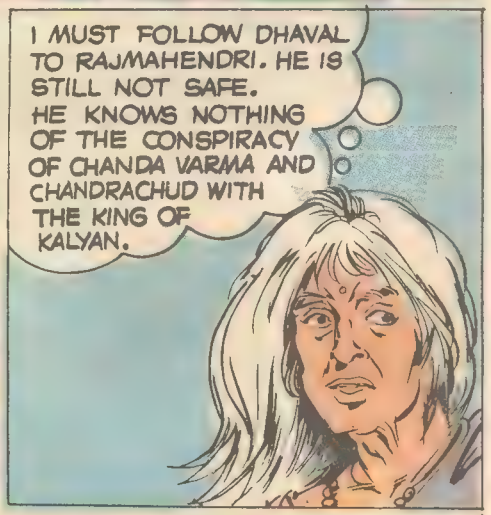
LATER —
THEY'RE ALL DEAD DRUNK!
QUICK! TO THE CELLAR. DHAVAL WILL DIE TOMORROW IF WE ARE NOT IN TIME.

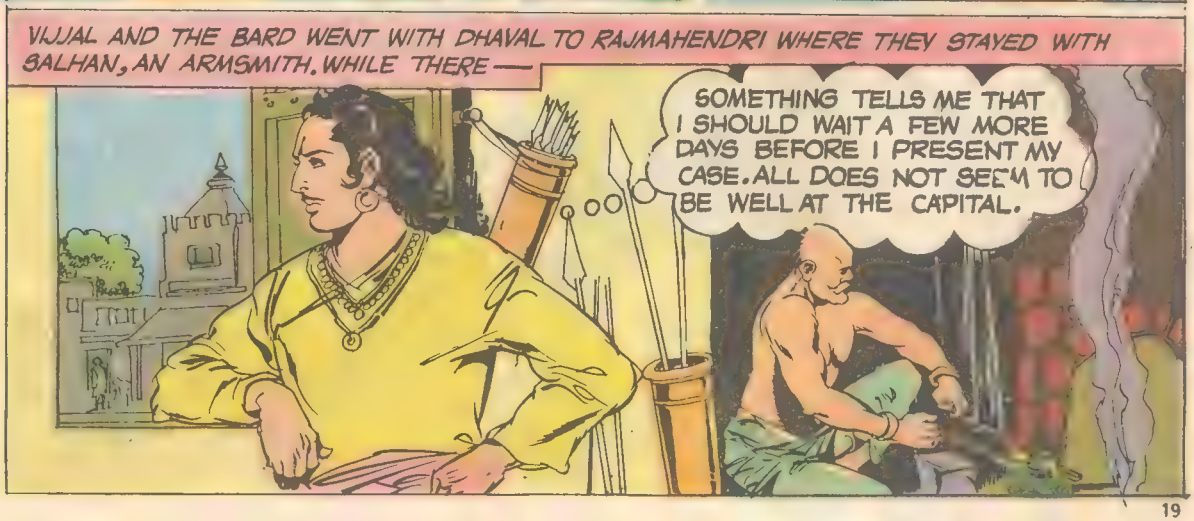

EARLY NEXT MORNING, AT FORT AJINKYA, AS THE NOOSE WAS ABOUT TO FALL ROUND DHAVAL'S NECK, A DAZZLING LIGHT LIT UP THE SKIES. ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE, THE GHOST APPEARED AND POINTING TO THE GALLOWS SHOOK HIS HEAD.
HE IS INNOCENT! THE MASTER OF THE CASTLE HAS DECLARED IT.
ENOUGH OF THAT NONSENSE! PROCEED WITH THE EXECUTION!

JUST THEN—
STOP! STOP! HE'S INNOCENT!
I AM ALIVE! LOOK AT ME!

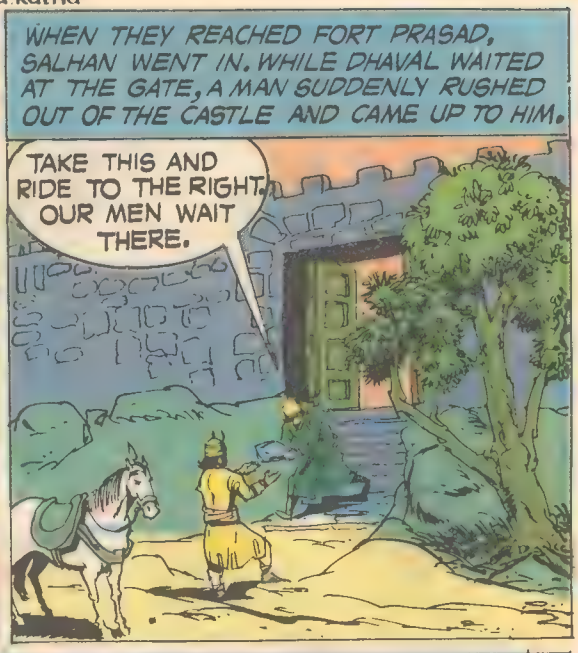
VIJJAL, CHANDRASENA, THE BARD AND VANACHARI RAN TOWARDS DHAVAL.
DEAR, DEAR DHAVAL! THANK GOD WE ARRIVED IN TIME.

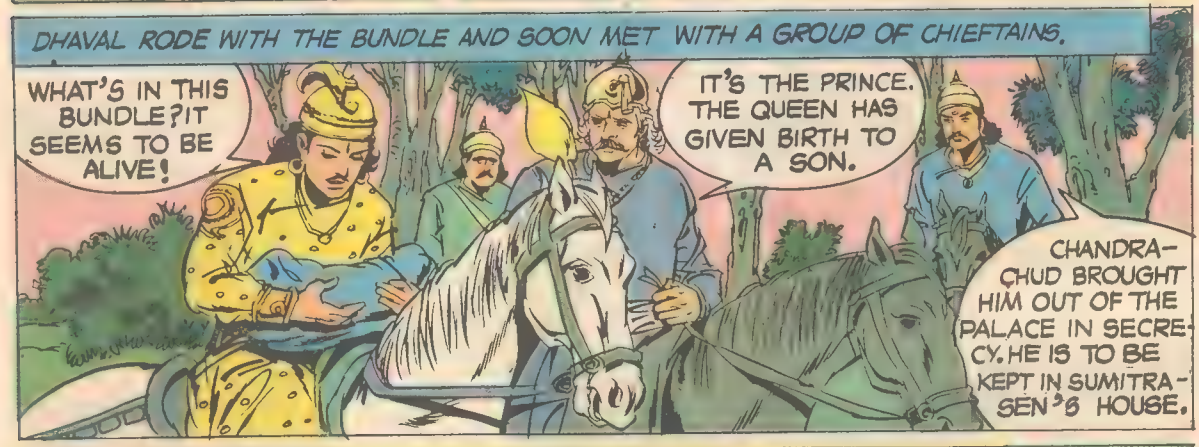

AH! MY SON! YOU ARE ALIVE. THEN DHAVAL IS INNOCENT. THERE IS MISCHIEF AFOOT. LET US FLEE TO MY FRIEND, THE MASTER OF FORT ABHED.
I SHALL GO TO RAJMAHENDRI AND SUE CHANDA VARMA FOR GIVING FALSE EVIDENCE.
THE SCOUNDREL WAS OUT TO SELL LALITA TO THE DACOITS.

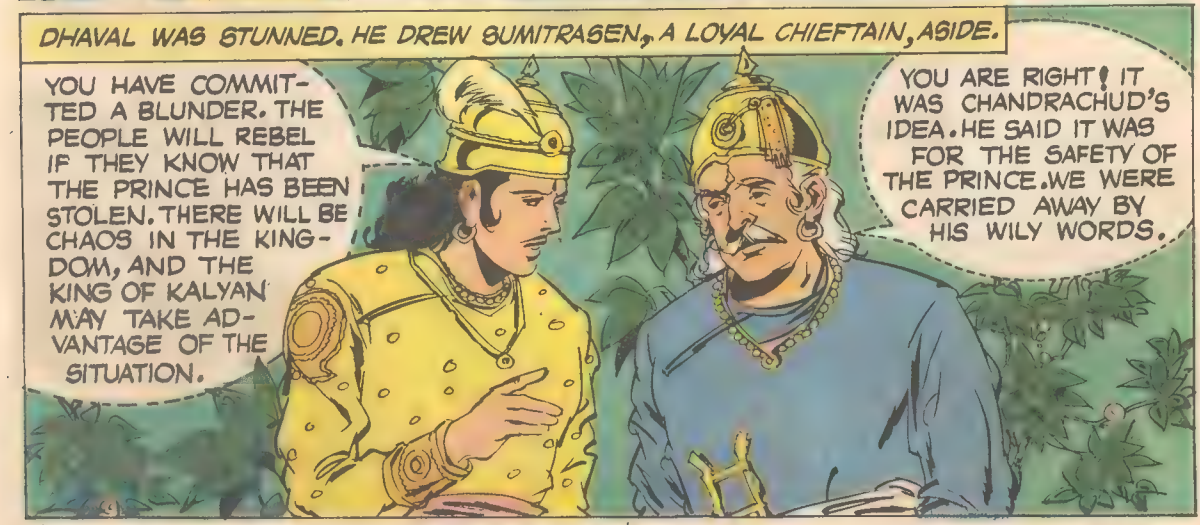

I MUST FOLLOW DHAVAL TO RAJMAHENDRI. HE IS STILL NOT SAFE. HE KNOWS NOTHING OF THE CONSPIRACY OF CHANDA VARMA AND CHANDRACHUD WITH THE KING OF KALYAN.


VIJJAL AND THE BARD WENT WITH DHAVAL TO RAJMAHENDRI WHERE THEY STAYED WITH SALHAN, AN ARMSMITH. WHILE THERE—
SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT I SHOULD WAIT A FEW MORE DAYS BEFORE I PRESENT MY CASE. ALL DOES NOT SEEM TO BE WELL AT THE CAPITAL.

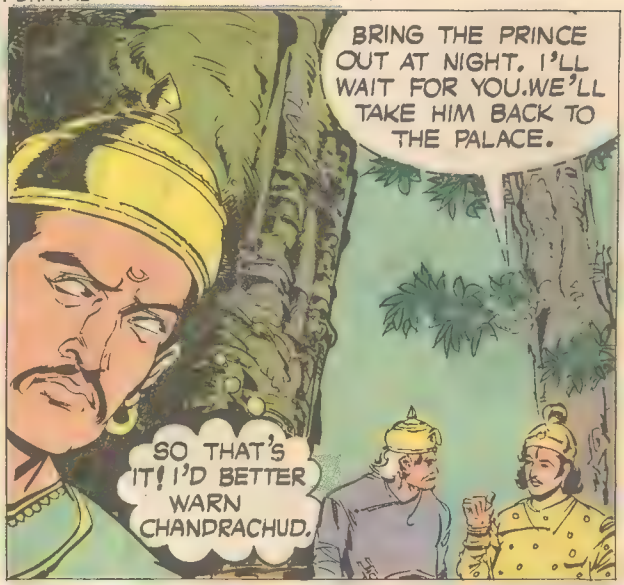
THAT EVENING —
DHAVAL, I'M GOING TO FORT PRASAD TO DELIVER THESE ARMS TO CHANDRACHUD.
I'M FREE. I'LL GO WITH YOU, SALHAN, AND HELP YOU CARRY THEM.

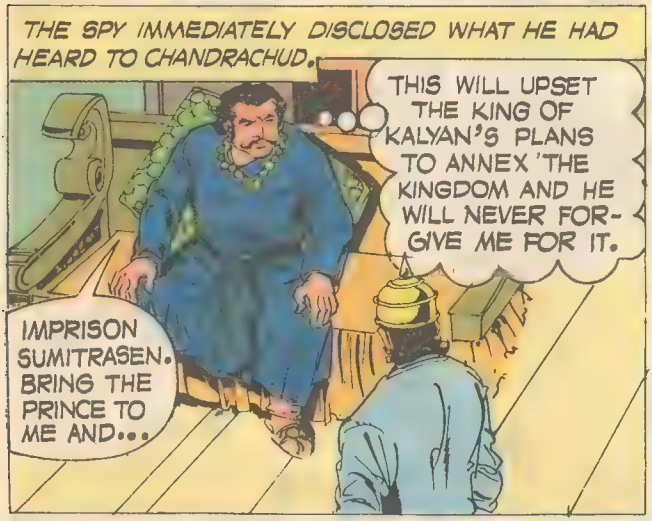

WHEN THEY REACHED FORT PRASAD, SALHAN WENT IN. WHILE DHAVAL WAITED AT THE GATE, A MAN SUDDENLY RUSHED OUT OF THE CASTLE AND CAME UP TO HIM.
TAKE THIS AND RIDE TO THE RIGHT. OUR MEN WAIT THERE.


DHAVAL RODE WITH THE BUNDLE AND SOON MET WITH A GROUP OF CHIEFTAINS.
WHAT'S IN THIS BUNDLE? IT SEEMS TO BE ALIVE!
IT'S THE PRINCE. THE QUEEN HAS GIVEN BIRTH TO A SON.
CHANDRA-CHUD BROUGHT HIM OUT OF THE PALACE IN SECRECY. HE IS TO BE KEPT IN SUMITRA-SEN'S HOUSE.

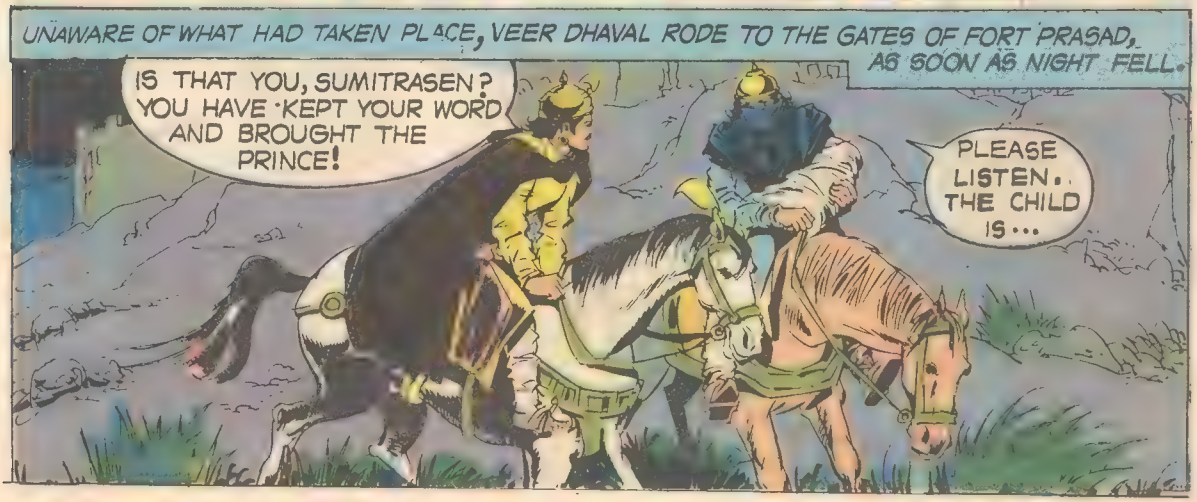

DHAVAL WAS STUNNED. HE DREW SUMITRASEN, A LOYAL CHIEFTAIN, ASIDE.
YOU HAVE COMMITTED A BLUNDER. THE PEOPLE WILL REBEL IF THEY KNOW THAT THE PRINCE HAS BEEN STOLEN. THERE WILL BE CHAOS IN THE KINGDOM, AND THE KING OF KALYAN MAY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION.
YOU ARE RIGHT! IT WAS CHANDRACHUD'S IDEA. HE SAID IT WAS FOR THE SAFETY OF THE PRINCE. WE WERE CARRIED AWAY BY HIS WILY WORDS.

WE MUST RESTORE THE PRINCE TO THE QUEEN.
I'M WILLING. BUT HOW SHALL WE DO IT?


BRING THE PRINCE OUT AT NIGHT. I'LL WAIT FOR YOU. WE'LL TAKE HIM BACK TO THE PALACE.
SO THAT'S IT! I'D BETTER WARN CHANDRACHUD.


THE SPY IMMEDIATELY DISCLOSED WHAT HE HAD HEARD TO CHANDRACHUD.
THIS WILL UPSET THE KING OF KALYAN'S PLANS TO ANNEX THE KINGDOM AND HE WILL NEVER FORGIVE ME FOR IT.
IMPRISON SUMITRASEN. BRING THE PRINCE TO ME AND...

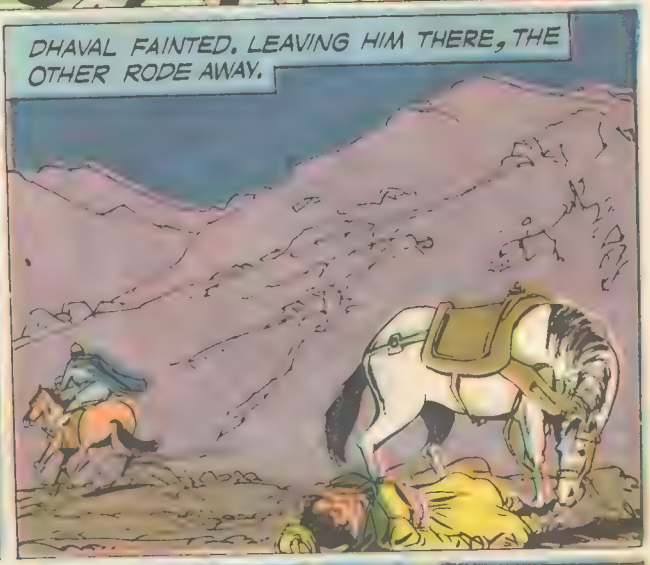
...DECLARE DHAVAL A TRAITOR!

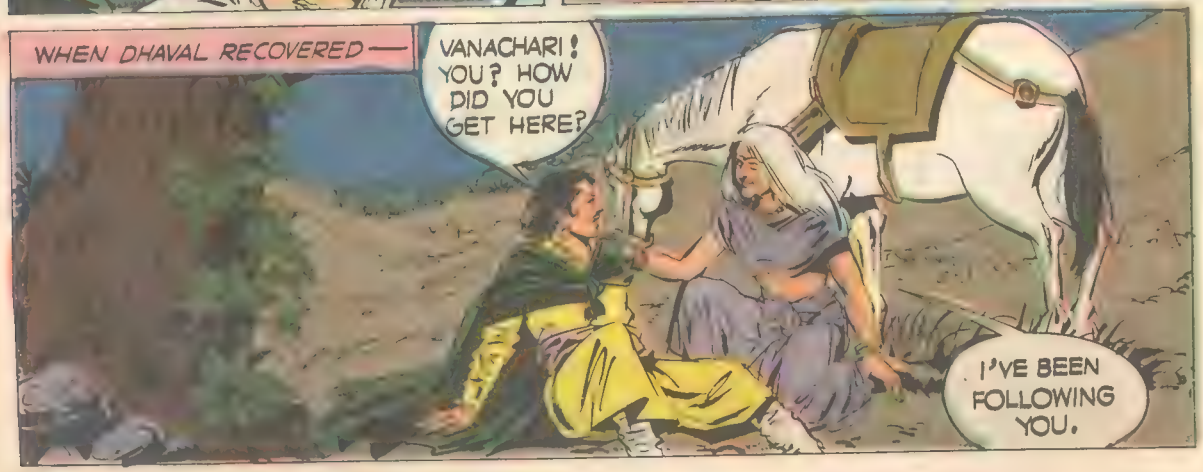

UNAWARE OF WHAT HAD TAKEN PLACE, VEER DHAVAL RODE TO THE GATES OF FORT PRASAD, AS SOON AS NIGHT FELL.
IS THAT YOU, SUMITRASEN? YOU HAVE KEPT YOUR WORD AND BROUGHT THE PRINCE!
PLEASE LISTEN. THE CHILD IS...

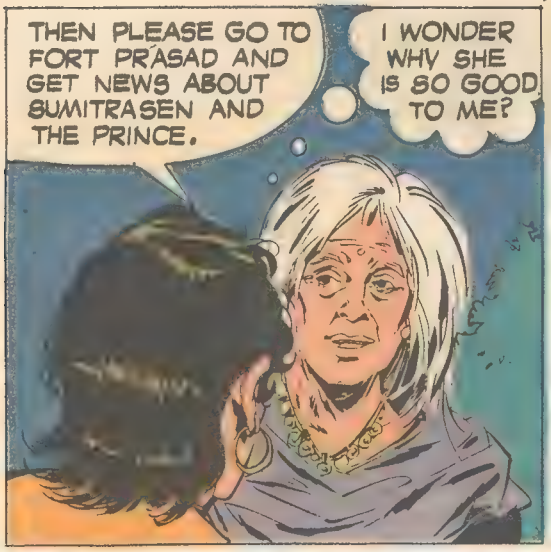
WE'LL TALK LATER. WE MUST GET OUT OF HERE FAST.

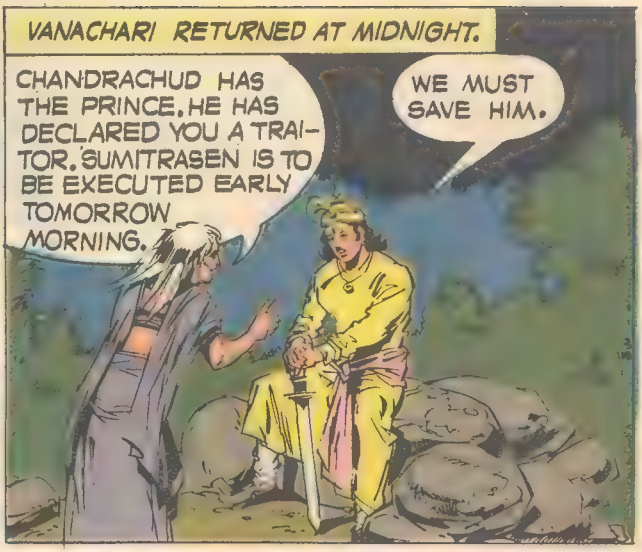
AT A SAFE DISTANCE, DHAVAL UNCOVERED THE BUNDLE TO GIVE THE INFANT A BREATH OF AIR. HE WAS SHOCKED TO FIND IT COLD AND STIFF.
I WAS TRYING TO TELL YOU ALL THE WHILE... THE CHILD IS DEAD.
THE PRINCE, DEAD?

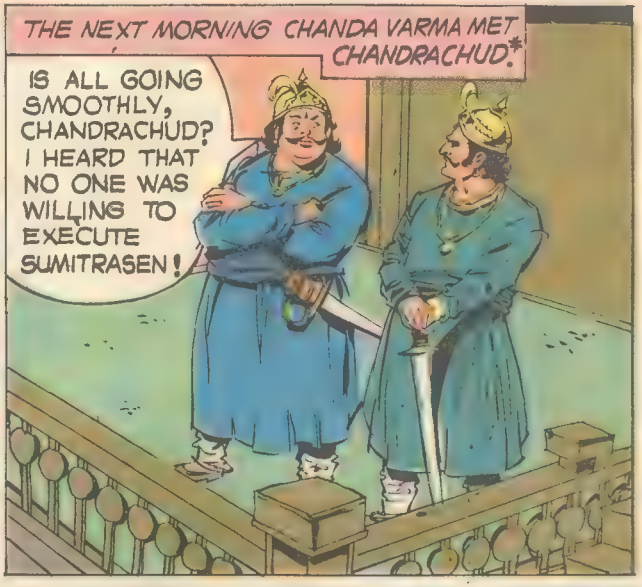
NOT THE PRINCE. MY SON. PLEASE GIVE MY DEAD CHILD BACK TO ME. I AM NOT SUMITRASEN. HE HAS BEEN IMPRISONED BY CHANDRACHUD.
NO!

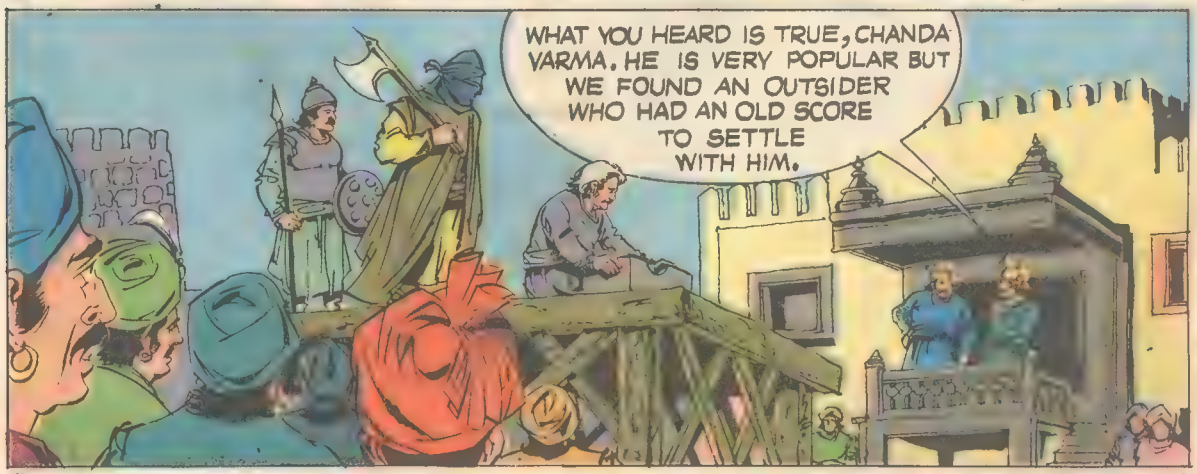

DHAVAL FAINTED. LEAVING HIM THERE, THE OTHER RODE AWAY.


WHEN DHAVAL RECOVERED—
VANACHARI! YOU? HOW DID YOU GET HERE?
I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING YOU.



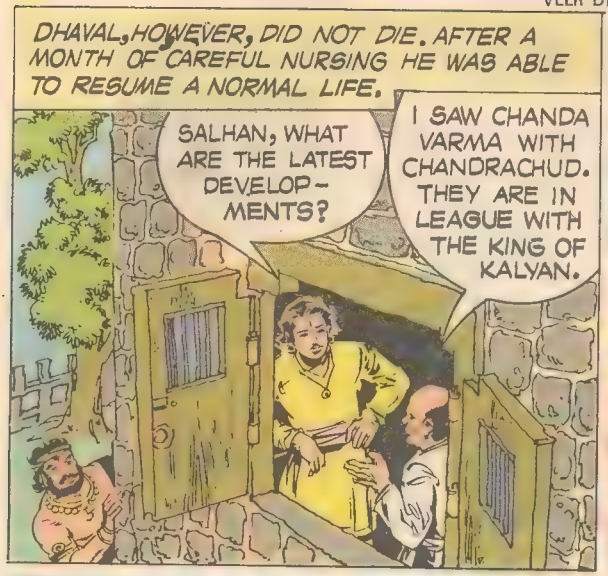


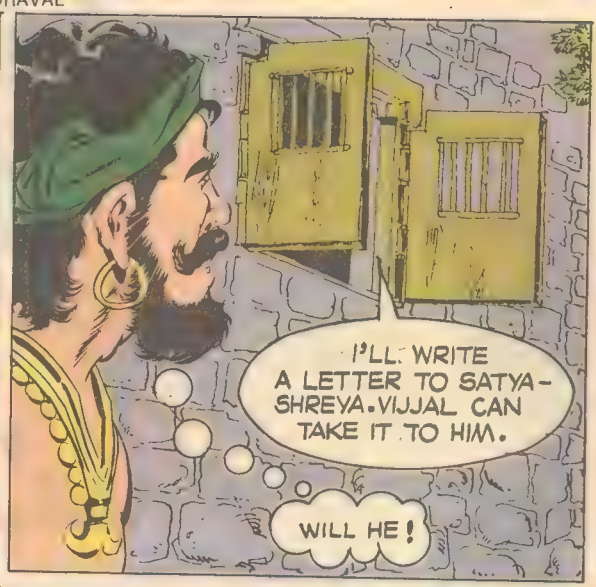


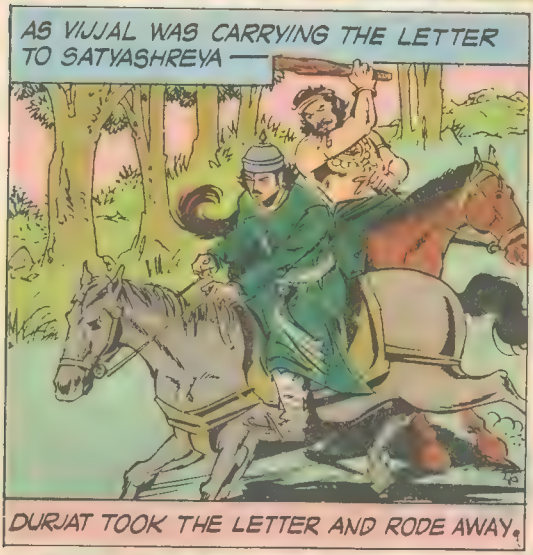


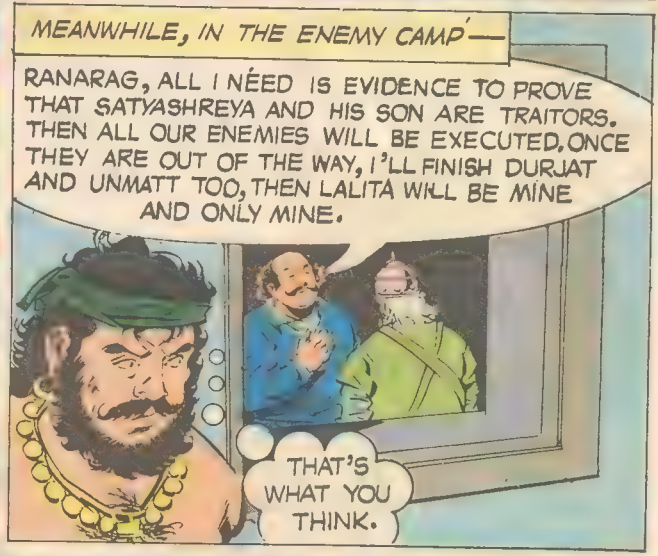
* THE MASTER OF FORT PRASAD

AS THE EXECUTIONER RAISED HIS AXE —
WHO ARE YOU? LET ME KNOW YOUR NAME BEFORE I DIE. I DO NOT REMEMBER WRONGING ANYONE.
I'M DHAVAL. QUICK! TAKE THIS DAGGER AND CHARGE OUT OF HERE.
IN AN INSTANT, BRANDISHING THEIR WEAPONS, THE TWO OF THEM RUSHED THROUGH THE STUNNED CROWD.
HE'S MADE HIS ESCAPE!
WHO COULD HIS SAVIOUR BE?
I CAN'T SAY I'M NOT GLAD. HE IS A GOOD MAN AND WE HAVE TOO FEW OF THEM.
AT THE GATES OF THE FORT —
WE CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH, VANACHARI. I'LL GO BACK TO RAJMAHENDRI. MY FRIENDS THERE MUST BE WORRIED ABOUT ME.
I'LL GO BACK TO FORT AJINKYA.
AND I'LL GO TO FORT ABHED AND GIVE SATYASHREYA ALL THE NEWS.
WHEN DHAVAL REACHED SALHAN'S HOUSE AT RAJMAHENDRI —
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? WHEN I CAME OUT OF CHANDRACHUD'S HOUSE YOU WERE NOT THERE.
DHAVAL! ... DURJAT!
A—A—AH
I SAID I'D GET EVEN WITH YOU ONE DAY.

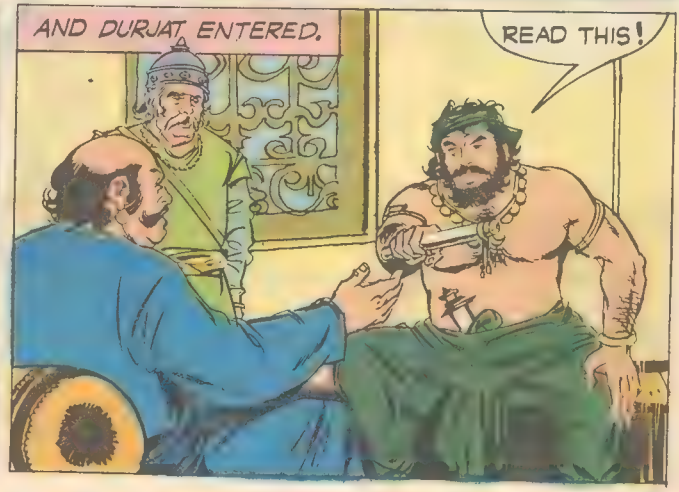

DHAVAL, HOWEVER, DID NOT DIE. AFTER A MONTH OF CAREFUL NURSING HE WAS ABLE TO RESUME A NORMAL LIFE.
SALHAN, WHAT ARE THE LATEST DEVELOP-MENTS?
I SAW CHANDA VARMA WITH CHANDRACHUD. THEY ARE IN LEAGUE WITH THE KING OF KALYAN.

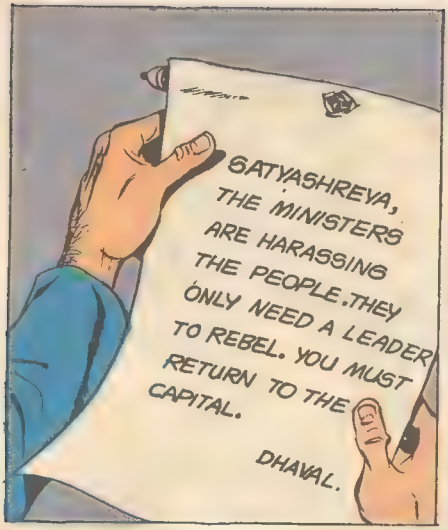

I'LL WRITE A LETTER TO SATYA-SHREYA. VIJJAL CAN TAKE IT TO HIM.
WILL HE!


AS VIJJAL WAS CARRYING THE LETTER TO SATYASHREYA —
DURJAT TOOK THE LETTER AND RODE AWAY.

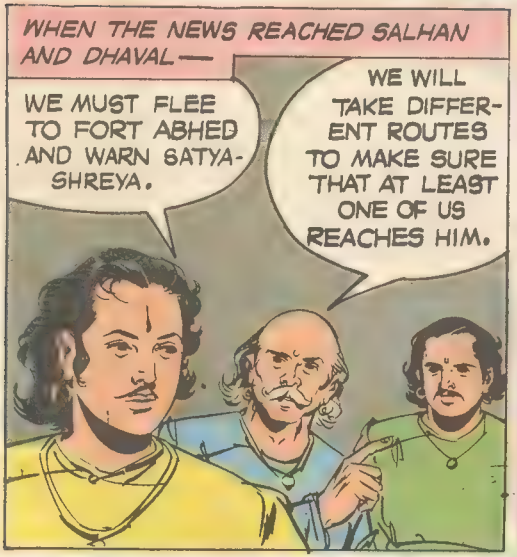

MEANWHILE, IN THE ENEMY CAMP —
RANARAG, ALL I NEED IS EVIDENCE TO PROVE THAT SATYASHREYA AND HIS SON ARE TRAITORS. THEN ALL OUR ENEMIES WILL BE EXECUTED. ONCE THEY ARE OUT OF THE WAY, I'LL FINISH DURJAT AND UNMATT TOO, THEN LALITA WILL BE MINE AND ONLY MINE.
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK.

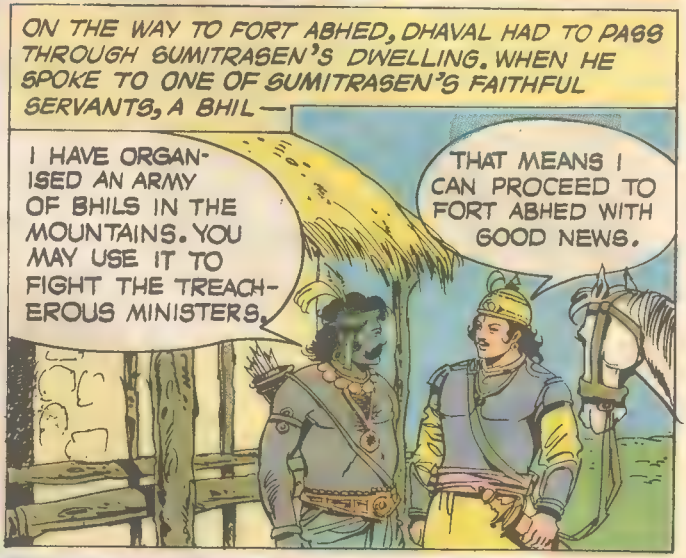
I'LL GIVE HIM THE EVIDENCE. ONCE DHAVAL AND THE OTHERS ARE OUT OF THE WAY, I'LL FINISH CHANDA VARMA.

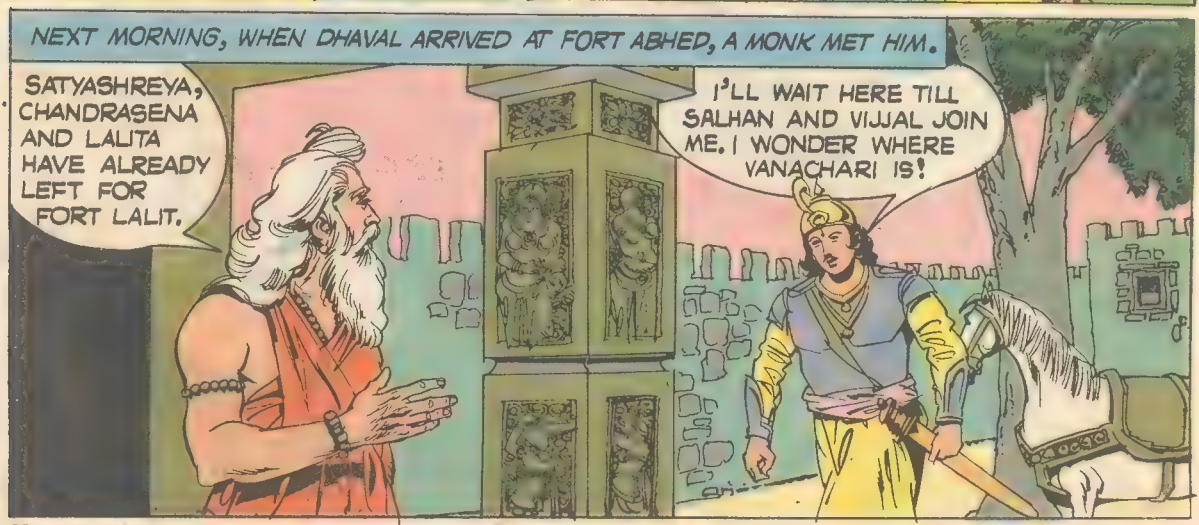

AND DURJAT ENTERED.
READ THIS!

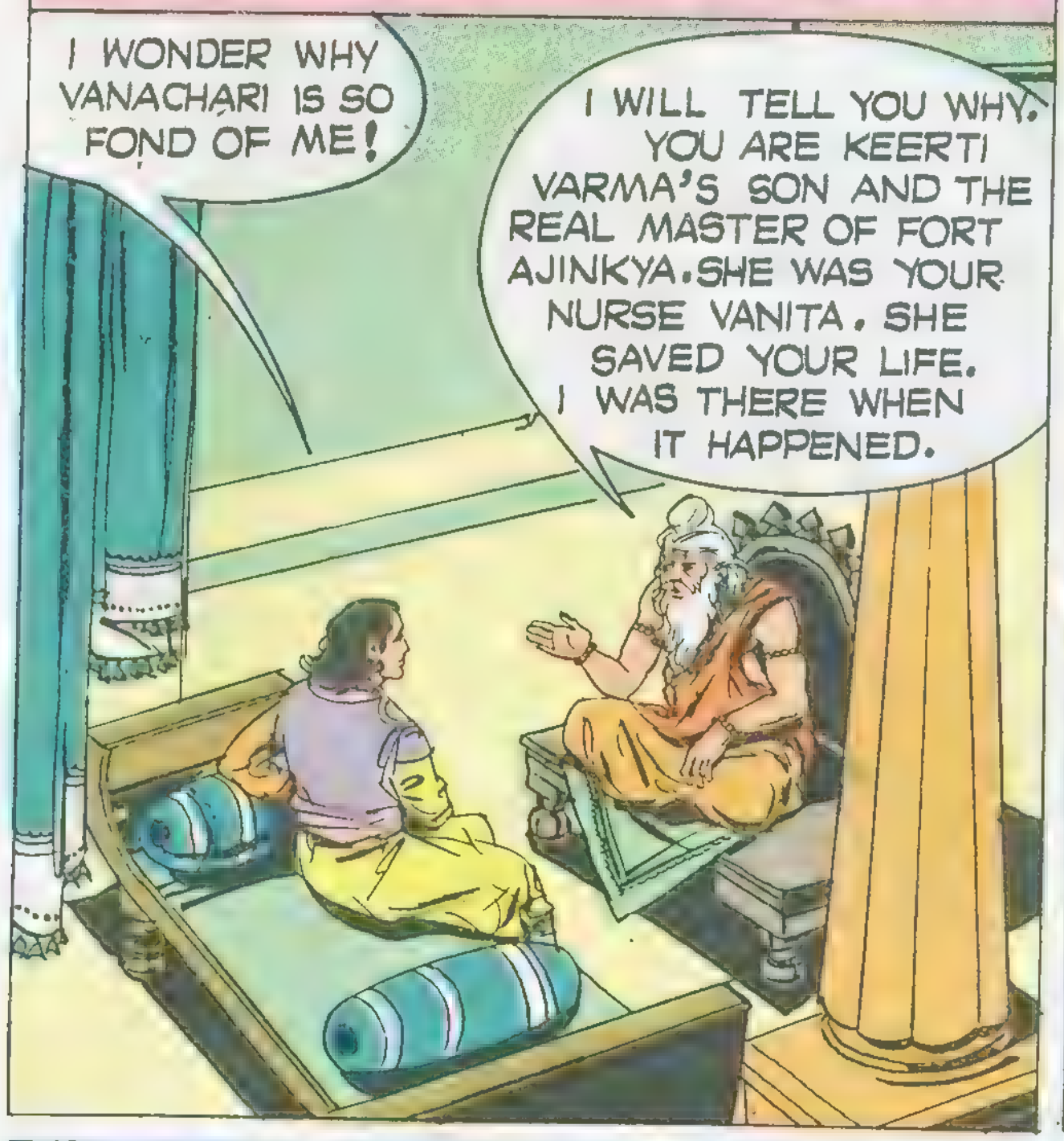

SATYASHREYA, THE MINISTERS ARE HARASSING THE PEOPLE. THEY ONLY NEED A LEADER TO REBEL. YOU MUST RETURN TO THE CAPITAL.
DHAVAL.

A JUBILANT CHANDA VARMA TOOK THE LETTER TO CHANDRACHUD AND THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.
ARREST THE TRAITORS! THEY MUST BE HANGED.


WHEN THE NEWS REACHED SALHAN AND DHAVAL—
WE MUST FLEE TO FORT ABHED AND WARN SATYASHREYA.
WE WILL TAKE DIFFERENT ROUTES TO MAKE SURE THAT AT LEAST ONE OF US REACHES HIM.


ON THE WAY TO FORT ABHED, DHAVAL HAD TO PASS THROUGH SUMITRASEN'S DWELLING. WHEN HE SPOKE TO ONE OF SUMITRASEN'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS, A BHIL—
I HAVE ORGANISED AN ARMY OF BHILS IN THE MOUNTAINS. YOU MAY USE IT TO FIGHT THE TREACHEROUS MINISTERS.
THAT MEANS I CAN PROCEED TO FORT ABHED WITH GOOD NEWS.


NEXT MORNING, WHEN DHAVAL ARRIVED AT FORT ABHED, A MONK MET HIM.
SATYASHREYA, CHANDRASENA AND LALITA HAVE ALREADY LEFT FOR FORT LALIT.
I'LL WAIT HERE TILL SALHAN AND VIJJAL JOIN ME. I WONDER WHERE VANACHARI IS!


LATER, AS THE MONK AND DHAVAL SAT TALKING—
I WONDER WHY VANACHARI IS SO FOND OF ME!
I WILL TELL YOU WHY. YOU ARE KEERTI VARMA'S SON AND THE REAL MASTER OF FORT AJINKYA. SHE WAS YOUR NURSE VANITA. SHE SAVED YOUR LIFE. I WAS THERE WHEN IT HAPPENED.

AND THE MONK TOLD HIM ALL ABOUT THE COLD-BLOODED MURDER.
THAT EXPLAINS EVERYTHING! MY FATHER'S GHOST... VANACHARI'S CONCERN... I WILL NOT REST TILL I HAVE EXPOSED THE FOUL CRIME AND BROUGHT PEACE TO MY FATHER'S SOUL.

THE NEXT DAY, SALHAN AND VIJJAL ARRIVED AT FORT ABHED.
CHANDRACHUD MUST BE DEFEATED. THE PRINCE SHALL BE FREED, AND DECLARED KING OF THE LAND. YOU GO AHEAD AND WARN SATYASHREYA. I'LL FOLLOW LATER WITH THE BHIL ARMY.

MEANWHILE, CHANDA VARMA, AFTER CONSULTING CHANDRACHUD, WAS ALSO PLANNING TO LEAVE WITH HIS ARMY FOR FORT LALIT.
I MUST FINISH SATYASHREYA AND HIS SON BEFORE DHAVAL CAN WARN THEM. I WILL TACKLE HIM AND THE OTHERS LATER.

DHAVAL, HOWEVER, REACHED FORT LALIT WITH THE BHIL ARMY BEFORE CHANDA VARMA AND HIS MEN. HE TOLD SATYASHREYA ALL THAT THE MONK HAD TOLD HIM.

SO THAT IS WHY HIS GHOST VISITS THE CASTLE. LET US KEEP THE SECRET FOR A FEW MORE DAYS, MY SON.

CHANDA VARMA'S ARMY SOON ARRIVED AT FORT LALIT. A TERRIBLE BATTLE WAS FOUGHT.

MY SWORD... I'M DONE FOR! I'D BETTER FLEE FOR MY LIFE.

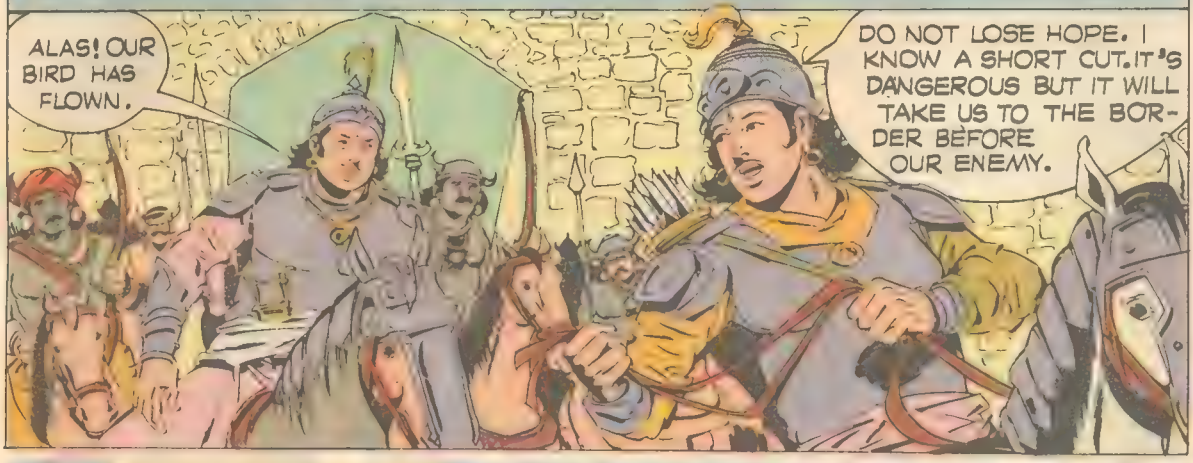
VICTORY IS OURS!

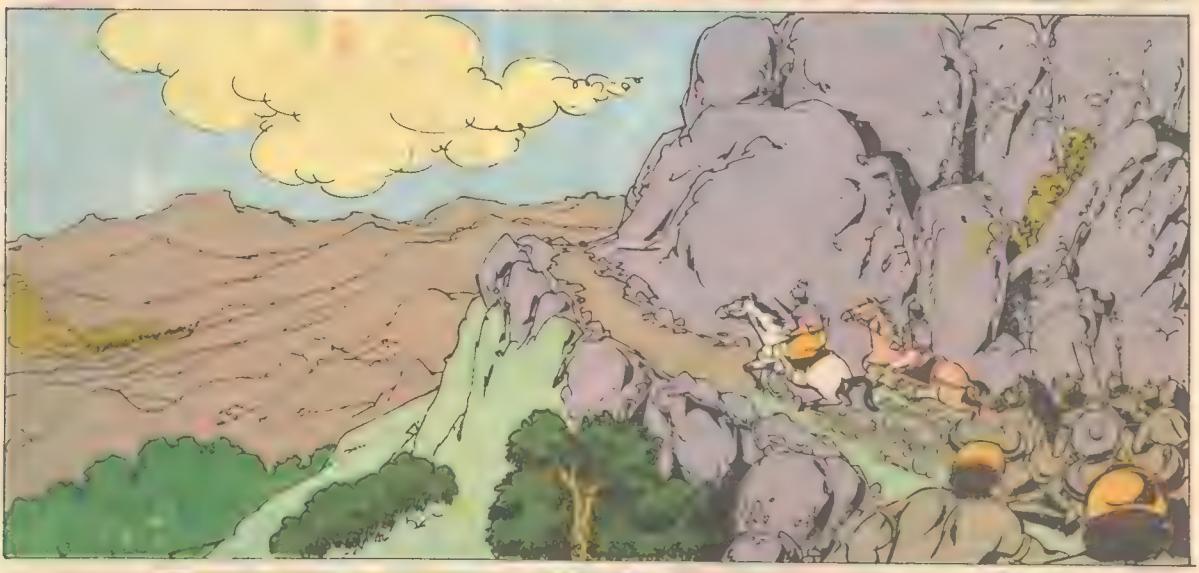
CHANDA VARMA HAS RUN AWAY! THE COWARD!

SATYASHREYA'S ARMY WAS JUBILANT.

MY BRAVE MEN, WE WILL CELEBRATE LATER. WE HAVE YET TO RESCUE THE PRINCE FROM FORT PRASAD.

BUT WHEN DHAVAL, CHANDRASENA AND THEIR MEN REACHED FORT PRASAD, CHANDRACHUD, ALONG WITH THE PRINCE AND A SMALL ARMY WAS ALREADY ON HIS WAY TO KALYAN.





WHEN CHANDRACHUD AND HIS MEN DREW NEAR, DHAVAL, CHANDRASENA AND THEIR MEN CHARGED.

THAT COWARD, CHANDA VARMA, IS WITH THEM. I'LL TAKE HIM ON. YOU FIGHT CHANDRACHUD.

AT LAST CHANDRACHUD SURRENDERED.

WHILE THEY'RE BUSY WITH THE PRINCE, I'D BETTER ESCAPE.

SATYASHREYA, CHANDRASENA, DHAVAL, SUMITRASEN, SALHAN, VIJAL AND THE BARD WENT TO THE PALACE TO HAND OVER THE PRINCE TO THE QUEEN.

OH! MY SON! MY DEAR SON! YOU ARE SAFE! I AM INDEBTED TO YOU, SATYASHREYA.

IT IS VEER DHAVAL WHO DESERVES ALL THE CREDIT.

MEANWHILE, CHANDA VARMA WHO WAS BACK AT FORT AJINKYA, HAD NOT GIVEN UP HOPE. HE WENT TO DURJAT AND UNMATT.

DHAVAL MUST DIE!

HE MUST, MUSTN'T HE? SO YOU CAN FINISH US OFF TOO AND MARRY LALITA. SEIZE HIM, UNMATT! WE SHALL HANG HIM AT THE GALLOWS MEANT FOR DHAVAL.

CHANDA VARMA WENT TO THE GALLOWS, A REPENTANT SOUL.

FORGIVE ME, DHAVAL.

AS DURJAT AND UNMATT RODE AWAY, THEY WERE FOLLOWED BY THE GHOST AND DRIVEN TO THEIR DEATH.

E-E-EAH! DURJ-A-A-AT!

HELP!

AFTER LEAVING THE QUEEN, DHAVAL AND THE OTHERS WENT TO THE CRYSTAL PILLAR AND PAID HOMAGE TO THE OLD MASTER OF THE CASTLE.

FATHER, YOUR SON HAS BEEN INSTALLED AS THE RIGHTFUL MASTER OF FORT AJINKYA.

AND MY DAUGHTER SHALL BE HIS BRIDE. YOU MAY REST IN PEACE.

AMAR CHITRA KATHA
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13 THE PANDAVA PRINCES
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15 RAMA
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115 PAREEKSHIT
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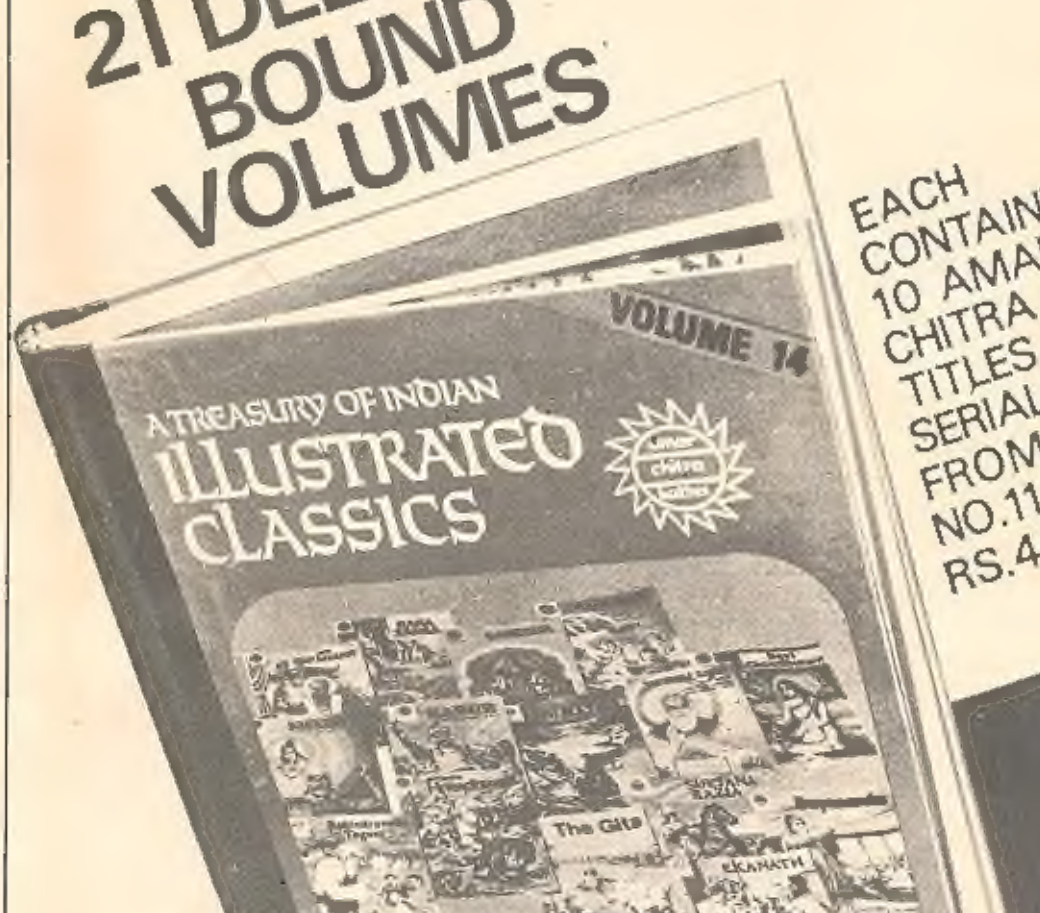

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